Strong quake kills baby in Samar; 5 others hurt

Story on Page A2

Dec. 24, 26, Jan. 2 are non-working days

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A LONG Christmas break awaits government and private sector employees after Malacañang yesterday declared Dec. 24 and 26 and Jan. 2 next year as special non-working days.

Proclamation No. 303, issued by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo by au-

(SEE A4 for)

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Palace woos Lopezes for the 'dream team'

By Carlita Pablo

THE KEY to clinching the GMA-Roberto "dream team" is in the hands of Sen. Noli de Castro's boss Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III, chair of the powerful ABS-CBN media group.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has designated her college classmate, Secretary

(PALACE: A4)

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Loren ready to fight Noli

Race for vice president shaping up as battle of ABS-CBN talents

By Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon and Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. LOREN Legarda sees nothing wrong in her possible face-off with her former ABS-CBN colleague, Sen. Noli de Castro, in the vice presidential race in May.

"I don't see any problem if we face each other in the vice presidential race because we belong to different parties," Legarda, who left the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats last month, said in Science City of Muñoz yesterday.

Malacañang and congressional officials are pushing for a team up between President Macapagal-Arroyo and De Castro. A top congressional leader described the tandem as the "winning team."

A Macapagal-De Castro ticket "appears" to be a done deal, according to Senate President Franklin Drilon.

He said he got the information from an associate of the Lopezes, the family behind the broadcast network ABS-CBN, which helped launched De Castro's career in broadcasting and later in politics.

Drilon said his other source was someone who was given the same information by another Lopez associate.

Legarda said she would leave her political fate to the people who she hoped would vote for candidates based on "accomplishments and integrity."

Her contributions in various parts of the country show that people are "enthusiastic" about her plan to run for vice president, according to the senator.

Legarda, a guest at a symposium on environmental concerns at the Central Luzon State University, said she would announce before Christmas her political plans and the political party under which she would run.

Refusing to be engaged in an early fight with Legarda, De Cas-

(LOREN: A4)

THEY'RE off and running: The "voices" of the giant TV network, Senators Loren Legarda and Noli de Castro.

PHOTOS BY

3 suspects in kidnap of Coke exec arrested

By Christian V. Esguerra

UNDER intense pressure to solve the crime fast, the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force headed by Angelo Reyes yesterday announced the arrest of three suspects in the abduction and murder of Coca-Cola executive Bert Chua Sy.

Combined operations of the Parañaque and Cavite police arrested Arnesto Pella and Ramon Dimol in a house in Block 13-L, Lot 18, Heritage Homes, Barangay Gregorio, in Trece Martires as several execs Tuesday after suspects. Pella's daughter Edith Pella Alcaraz and a certain Babes, remain at large.

Senior Supt. Ronald Estilles, Parañaque police chief, yesterday said Alcaraz and Babes were the ones who received Sy and her abductors in Cavite on Monday night.

The surrender of Ramon Salinas to Parañaque police on Tuesday night led to the arrest of Pella and Dimol, according to the Parañaque police chief. Estilles said the suspects were members of the Wenny kidnap-for-ransom gang.

"He said he turned himself in because his conscience was bothering him," Estilles told the Inquirer, referring to Vallano who admitted that he had driven the victim in his group's Cavite safe house.

Sy, 52, commercial finance director of Coca-Cola Export Corp.,

(SUSPECTS: A6)

"HEROES' born," Cardinal Sin is hailed by former Presidents Cory Aquino and Fidel Ramos during rites of tribute to the longest-serving archbishop of Manila at the Edsa Shrine on Wednesday, two days before his retirement.

CHRIS ONGOCO

Critics question Reyes' ability

By Christian V. Esguerra

SO how does former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes in his new role as the government's point man against kidnap gangs?

Many police officers now working under him at the newly created National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF) are convinced that he's the best man for the job. But others remain skeptical that his vast military background will yield significant results.

"He's always in a rush and that's not how we are supposed to operate against kidnap-for-ransom groups," said one ranking official, who has been involved for several years in anti-kidnapping operations by the Philippine National Police.

Such an attitude, the official told the Inquirer, was very evident with Reyes' handling of the abduction and killing of Coca-Cola executive Bert Chua Sy.

Pressed by an outraged public to produce results as soon as possible, Reyes, as the NAKTF chief, constantly rattled police officers into arresting those behind the

(CRITICS: A6)

Sin: Retired but not silent

THE MAN who toppled two presidents of this country was his vintage self during ceremonies to honor his 28 years of service as the archbishop of Manila.

"I am retiring but I am not keeping quiet. You cannot stop me from speaking," Jaime Cardinal Sin said yesterday at the Edsa Shrine two days before his retirement.

It was the prelate, who, during four days in February 1986 first sounded the clarion call for people to come to Edsa to defend the military faction led by Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos, which had broken away from the martial rule of President Ferdinand Marcos.

"Can you imagine what would have happened to them (Ramos and Enrile) and us if Cardinal Sin had just chosen to play it safe and keep quiet?" former President Cory Aquino said in the course of her remarks paying tribute to the cardinal.

Sin became Manila archbishop in 1974 at the height of martial law.

It was also in Edsa where Sin rallied thousands in January, 2001 to force out then President Joseph Estrada for charges of alleged massive corruption.

Sin was hailed as the heroes' hero by former Presidents Aquino and Ramos and former Senate President Jovito Salonga.

Along with Sin, Mr. Aquino led the first popular revolt in Edsa that led to the downfall of the Marcos regime in 1986.

It was Sin who was a key player in making sure Mr. Aquino assumed the presidency after Marcos amid the military's own manipulative designs on the seat of power.

(SIN: A6)

One is enough, 2 too much under new Church rules

By Martin F. Manlf

ONE is enough; two is too much.

Under a new set of guidelines issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, a priest found to have fathered a child would be meted out sanctions but would not be automatically defrocked.

But a priest who has fathered two children would be immediately asked to leave the Church "no matter what the excuses are," outgoing CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo told re-

(SIN: A6)

Pinoys sing 'My Way' amid gunfire in Iraq

By TJ Burgonio

WHEN you hear strains of Frank Sinatra's "My Way" rising above the crack of gunfire and the din of explosions in the middle of the Iraqi desert, you can be sure there are Filipino peacekeepers nearby.

Members of the 96-strong Philippine peacekeeping force in war-torn Iraq are turning to videoke singing to keep their spirits high amid the escalating attacks on coalition forces.

"We brought along our magic mike," Brig. Gen. Pedro Balabaluga, commander of the Philippine Humanitarian Contingent to Iraq, said at a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

(PINOYS: A6)

Erap torn between ma, US operation

By Armand N. Nocum and Juliet L. Javellana

"THIS is my greatest dilemma," former President Joseph Estrada said. "Should I leave my 98-year-old mother to undergo operation for my illness in the United States, or should I stay close to her in what could be her last days?"

Estrada yesterday told the Inquirer he might yet forgo surgery in the United States even after months of seeking permission for it.

To help make up his mind, Estrada asked Dr. Antonio Calanoc, orthopedic and spine surgeon at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, to check his condition again last night. Calanoc assured that the ex-President was not getting better.

"Now it feels like electric current passes through my knees and hips," said Estrada. His doctors earlier said the ousted president faced possible paralysis from the waist down due to "multiple slipped discs at the lumbar section," aggravated by his arthritic knees.

If allowed, Estrada would rather leave after the presidential elections in May 2004. But he had a bigger problem, he said: "My mother's health is also fast deteriorating. She is always crying. I need her food, but she says she just wants to be with me."

Estrada lawyer Larry Gadon said Doña Mary was bedridden

(ERAP: A12)

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with occasional rains over Luzon and Visayas and isolated thunderstorms in Mindanao. Moderate to rough seas with occasional rains.

Second **FRONTPAGE**

Strong quake kills baby in Samar

BORONGAN, Eastern Samar—A five-month-old baby was killed and five persons were injured when a strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 earthquake struck Eastern Visayas early yesterday.

The offshore temblor's epicenter was about 78 km northeast of Borongan, the provincial capital of Eastern Samar, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

The earthquake, which struck at 1:14 a.m., was felt as far away as Baguio City some 309 km from the epicenter.

The town of Can-avid, about 11 km north of Borongan, sustained the most damage from the tremor.

Can-avid Mayor Gil Norman Gerbise, describing the quake as the "strongest I've have felt the town[ ] in eight years," estimated the damage to property and infrastructure at P10-million.

He identified the lone fatality as Marvin Laguio, a five-month-old baby. Her mother Juliana, 38, suffered head injuries and was brought to the Eastern Samar Provincial Hospital in Borongan.

Bobby Calicor, Phivolcs acting chief in Palo, Leyte, said the tremor registered at intensity-5 in Catbalogan, Samar and Calbayog City, both in Samar, and intensity 4 in Catarman, Northern Samar, and in Palo and Tacloban City in Leyte.

Calicor said his office recorded five aftershocks between 1:15 a.m. and 8 a.m.

Juliana was the caretaker of a house in Can-avid's Barangay 9 where she and her baby were sleeping when the tremor struck. A portion of the wall collapsed on the mother and child.

The four others who were injured were hit by collapsing walls and furniture. They were identified as Ronald Ramos, 26, Clarabelle Gratz, 16, Babi Dobusan, 36, and Merlyn Barrayuta, 32.

Gerbise said almost 200 houses were damaged while the highway leading to and from the town sustained some cracks. He said the approvals of the Can-avid bridge rush by five lanes.

Local disaster officer Lutalo Montes said the town's public market also collapsed, eleven posts fell and roads cracked.

All classes were suspended in Can-avid as the Department of Public Works and Highways also declared two buildings of the Can-avid Central Elementary School as unusable. The school's concrete gate was also destroyed.

The Can-avid State College as well as its administration building, library, college department building, science building and auditorium hall were also damaged.

There were no reports of the Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative (Easamco) were knocked down, cutting off the power supply to the entire province. Power resumed at 5:40 p.m. yesterday.

Adriano Pangle, the director of the Office of the Civil Defense for Eastern Visayas, said the earthquake caused a landslide in Barangay Binahon in Tell town, Eastern Samar.

The landslide caused some transportation delays.

A report was also received that a portion of the wall and roof of the Hinabian (Samar) gym in Oras town, Eastern Samar had collapsed. Ellen R. Gabro and Joey A. Gabriel, PDI Visayas Bureau

SC ruling on Marcos 'loot' a closure—GMA

By Philip C. Tubeza and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said the Supreme Court's ruling with finality that the $683-million Swiss deposits of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos were ill-gotten will provide "closure" on one of the issues dividing the nation.

"This is part of national consolidation and reconciliation as we heal the wounds of the past and move forward to a brighter future," the President said in a statement.

The President said she believes that reconciliation will not be achieved if there is no closure on past divisions.

Ms Macapagal has described a "total reconciliation" program, reaching out to the Marcoses, the groups of ousted president Joseph Estrada, businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, rebel groups and her political foes.

"The Supreme Court ruling is a victory of the Filipino people," she said, adding that the recovered Marcos assets would be used to compensate human rights victims and for "the continuing quest of social justice."

She said the money, once transferred to the National Treasury, will be used to fund land reform and other programs for farmers.

She has promised that P8 billion would be set aside to compensate human rights victims of the Marcos regime while Congress deliberates the passage of a compensation bill for them.

Malacañang could not say when the government can get possession of the $683 million which is held in a escrow account at the Philippine National Bank but actually deposited in several Singapore banks.

Martial law victims in the House of Representatives yesterday lauded the Supreme Court decision but expressed fear that the money might be used to meet Mrs Arroyo's election.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said the money could fall into the wrong hands, including groups that are scheming to outlive out of court with the Marcoses.

Ocampo is the principal author of a bill seeking to set aside P10 billion from the $683 million to compensate the 9,539 human rights victims who won a judgment against the Marcoses in the Hawaii District Court in 1992.

The bill would amend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, which provides that recovered Marcos assets are to be used exclusively for the funding of the agrarian reform program.

Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said the House should now pass the compensation law, now on second reading, to fully implement the Supreme Court decision.

The proposed chairman's bill provides for the establishment of a separate account to ensure that the money is not used for other purposes, and the setting up of an independent institution to ensure the Marcos victims will be given just and adequate compensation.

THREE HEADS are better than one, or so shows this photo of President Macapagal-Arroyo in a huddle with Manila Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales (left) and US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone in Pagsanjan, Magdalena. (JOEY GUILAS/PCIC)

US troops may help AFP fight terrorists, says GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday that United States troops may help Philippine forces fight armed Islamic militants in Mindanao.

The President revived the idea of joint military exercises with the US when she arrived here with US Pacific Command chief Admiral Thomas Fargo and the Washington governor Emmanuel Pifol.

The President, speaking before an audience of 4,000 farmers, suggested that Pifol talk to Fargo about holding the Balikatan joint exercises in the province, which she said she knows the governor to be advocating.

Ms Macapagal, a staunch ally of US President George Bush's war on terror, met this week with Colin Bland, the US State Department's antiterrorism coordinator, who expressed concern over the activities across Southeast Asia of the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group behind the deadly Bali bombing last year.

Fargo arrived on Sunday to discuss the holding of joint military exercises in Bali on the Jemaah Islamiyah operations, among other issues. Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in Manila.

The President has recently declared the US as the Philippines' top national security threat.

The US-based Washington Post reported recently the continued training of 28 operatives in a Mindanao camp set up three years ago under the protection of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front with which the government is holding preparatory peace talks.

A series of police raids in Cotabato City last month led to the arrest of six alleged top lieutenants, 21 operatives, Taufek Refke, and the discovery of a suspected hideout and bomb-making equipment.

There are some 42 operatives who are still in the country and they are being hunted by the government. We are keeping them on the run so they cannot consolidate to plot our larger-scale terrorist actions," the President said on Tuesday.

"These 28 cells are at times given free passage by less-loved armed groups and we have asked the MILF leadership to intercede and unburden the terrorists," she said.

But Ermita said that "to all likelihood" the joint military exercises in Mindanao would not push through this year because talks over rules of engagement had bogged down.

Joint military exercises, code-named Balikatan (Shoulder to Shoulder), were held on Basilan island last year in which small units of US Special Forces trained Filipino troops fighting the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang.

The two governments had planned to expand the antiterrorist training outside Basilan and into other areas of Mindanao such as Sulu and Cotabato.

But talks over the so-called status of reference broke down over Philippine resistance to allowing US troops to remain a combat role. AFP and TJ Burgonio

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Solons dismiss 1st impeachment rap

By Cynthia D. Rubio

THE HOUSE committee on justice has voted 16-6-2 in favor of dismissing the first impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide and eight other justices of the Supreme Court filed by former President Joseph Estrada.

In a meeting yesterday approving the preliminary report dismissing the complaint, Eastern Samar Rep. Ekardo Veloso Libranio, committee chair, said the final outcome of the voting on the report reflected the anti-impeachment sentiment in the committee.

The committee said that while the complaint was sufficient in form, it was, however, insufficient in substance.

Libranio, a member of the Nacionalista People's Coalition which had pushed for the impeachment, expressed confidence that the committee's voting would be upheld in plenary voting.

"We're the second that is all impeachment cases, we were always upheld and sustained by the plenary," Libranio said.

He said he was hoping that the committee report would not be overthrown once it reaches the plenary.

Libranio, however, said they were expecting a worst-case scenario in the plenary voting where the committee's decision would be overturned and the report would be returned to the committee for formal hearing and investigation.

No rallies today

By Margaux C. Ortiz

PLANS of another massive rally in Makati City were put on hold yesterday when Mayor Jejomar Binay denied protesters' requests to stage another demonstration on Ayala Avenue today.

Binay, in a phone interview with the business, said the city government had to ask anti-administration groups to defer their plans for this week because the "City needs a breather."

"I have denied for no more valid for by this week. The protesters should allow the General Santos[illegible] to recover from last week's massive demonstration and violent dispersal," Binay said.

The mayor added that the leaders of the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) and Silverwhite, who requested for a rally permit earlier in the week, agreed to postpone their plans.

Japan to probe reports of WWII holdouts in RP

TOKYO—Japan will send government officials to the Philippines Thursday to investigate unconfirmed reports that a few Japanese soldiers are still hiding out in the jungle, refusing to surrender after World War II.

The mission, involving three researchers of the Health and Welfare Ministry, will search jungles of Luzon during a week-long investigation, a ministry official said Wednesday.

"We have received information that a former Japanese soldier had lived in a village in the suburb of Manila, pretending to be a local resident, and the man apparently contacted a few Japanese still hiding in a jungle before he died in 2996," the official said.

The mission also includes two former Japanese soldiers who surrendered in Philippine jungles and were sent back to Japan after the end of World War II.

If the reports prove true, it would be the first confirmation of Japanese holding out since 1974, when a former Imperial Army second lieutenant, Hiroo Onoda, returned to Japan after surviving for three decades in a jungle hideout refused to surrender. Onoda surrendered to then President Ferdinand Marcos.

But the ministry official played down the latest reports.

"There are many Japanese soldiers still living in areas where they were deployed and decided to stay on as local residents after World War II," the official said.

"Even if the reports are correct, the chances are high that the men made their own decision to stay there and lead a normal life together with local people, which is different from a wandering holdout with a rifle," the official said.

Some 4,000 Japanese soldiers reportedly refused to surrender and decided to go into jungles in the Philippines after the end of the war. AFP

NEW EXTRADITION BID

DOJ calls on Nida's daughter to cooperate

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Undersecretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday called on Raye Torres, the daughter of murdered actress Nida Blanca, to work with the justice department so they can file a stronger second petition for the extradition of suspect Joel Lazano Jurado from the United States.

"We should meet so that she would be with us from the start of the preparations," Gutierrez told reporters but denied having sent an emissary to Torres.

Torres and her lawyer Xavier Demetrios earlier accused the justice department and National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco of sabotaging the first extradition request resulting in its being junked by a California judge last week.

Gutierrez said the NBI was already collecting additional evidence and statements from witnesses for a new extradition appeal.

Arthur Cole, the US legal attaché, told the Department of Justice on Tuesday it would be better to file a new extradition bid rather than appeal to the Sacramento judge, Gregory Sellows, who dismissed the first petition. It is thought that a new petition may well end up with a different magistrate.

Gutierrez said there is no prescription period for the re-filing of the extradition petition.

"We are gathering more evidence and statements so that our request, which we know is already strong, would become stronger when we re-file it," Gutierrez said.

She called on the Blanca's close friends to come forward and tell everything they know about the actress' murder on Nov. 7, 2001 at the Atlanta Center building in San Juan.

Gutierrez said that prosecutors believe that Blanca's close friends have not told investigators everything they know about the killing.

"I hope that all those who love Nida Blanca who know something will come forward," she said.

Gutierrez also said that the DOJ is now preparing a report in Malacañang to explain what went wrong in the first extradition petition.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered DOJ Secretary Simeon Datumanong on Tuesday to explain what happened after Torres and Demetrios complained that the government did not show any interest in pursuing the case.

Gutierrez and Wycoco insist that they were not negligent and that they did their best. Demetrios has asked both officials to resign.

4,000 join PDI Readers Club

MORE than 4,000 young readers nationwide have registered for the Inquirer Readers Club (IRC) through the Philippine Daily Inquirer's "What's News" Test Game, which ran from July 27 to Sept. 24. The 4,052 teenagers who registered are now members of various benefits and discount from partner establishments.

The campaign, which was conducted in coordination with Intel Inc., Sony Ericsson Philippines and GMA Network, attracted more than 22,700 participants nationwide in one month. With the support of radio, television, cinema and print, the campaign generated interest among a predominantly young market: 139 percent below the age of 16, 32 percent from the 16-24 age bracket, 20 percent from the 25-31 bracket, and 4 percent from the 32-38 level.

The Grand Raffle Draw was televised over GMA-7 during the program "Love is Love" on Oct. 11.

The winner was Roelle Allwel Castro, 23 years old from Sampaloc, Manila, who won the grand "melon" package composed of a Pocket LifeBook P1110, Palm Zire 71, Pioneer DVD Blue Compo, Sony television set, Sony Cybershot camera, and a Sony Ericsson T310 with Communicam.

There were 16 consolation prize winners who will each receive P10,000 cash. A total of 80 Sony Ericsson T106 cellular phones were won in the daily draw, half of which have been claimed.

Aside from perks from partner establishments, IRC members will also get special privileges at Inquirer-sponsored youth events.

After a long verification process, the final and confirmed list of winners of the Inquirer's What's News Test Game will be announced in a print ad this weekend. Inquirer may be reached at tel. no. 897-88-88 loc. 238 or 209.

Sin: Retired but not silent

Boston, a Protestant, said that he hoped that "[Sin] will continue to be the conscience of the nation even after his retirement.

Bolinga, another Protestant, hailed Sin as "a living testimony on the true meaning of religion."

True friend

Sin was the man who made her husband, former senator Benigno Aquino Jr. feel like "the proudest Filipino" for being considered the archbishop's friend, Ms. Aquino recalled.

Quoting from her husband's letter to Sin in 1979, Ms. Aquino said that Sin came into her husband's life "at the nadir of [his] adversity" and proved that he was a true friend.

It was Sin who administered the anointing of the sick to the former senator in 1979 while he was on a 30-day hunger strike. The opposition leader, Marcos' biggest critic, was assassinated in 1983.

7 coup attempts

During her term as president, Ms. Aquino said she relied on the prayers and support of Cardinal Sin who mobilized seven coup attempts.

Sin, who suffers from kidney problems and diabetes, retired 71 last Aug. 21. He took his 27th year service tomorrow. He will be replaced by Cebu Archbishop Cardinal Jose Sanchez.

"I am retiring but I will not stop serving. Even retirees step out from having said serving you... I will be here. I will stay here. So don't be afraid," Sin said in his speech yesterday.

Sin said the Pope's acceptance of his resignation would give him more time to talk with God and "deal leisurely" with the people.

Villa San Miguel

"I will continue living in Villa San Miguel, only a few kilometers from here. But you could see me. Now I will visit you more often because I have more time. I have less office work," an obviously jovial Sin said.

Bishops said Sin's guidance did not end with his role in Edsa I, but his moral stature encouraged former Bicam Sen. Gen. Luis "Chavit" Singson to have all-out hostility against Estrada that led to his ouster in Edsa II.

"Archbishop Cardinal Sin did not organize a political party or adopt a program of governance, neither did he endorse any or consider plans and mission a political career. But Cardinal Sin has very fundamental principles of right and wrong – which is essentially all religious human and social and political differences," bishops said.

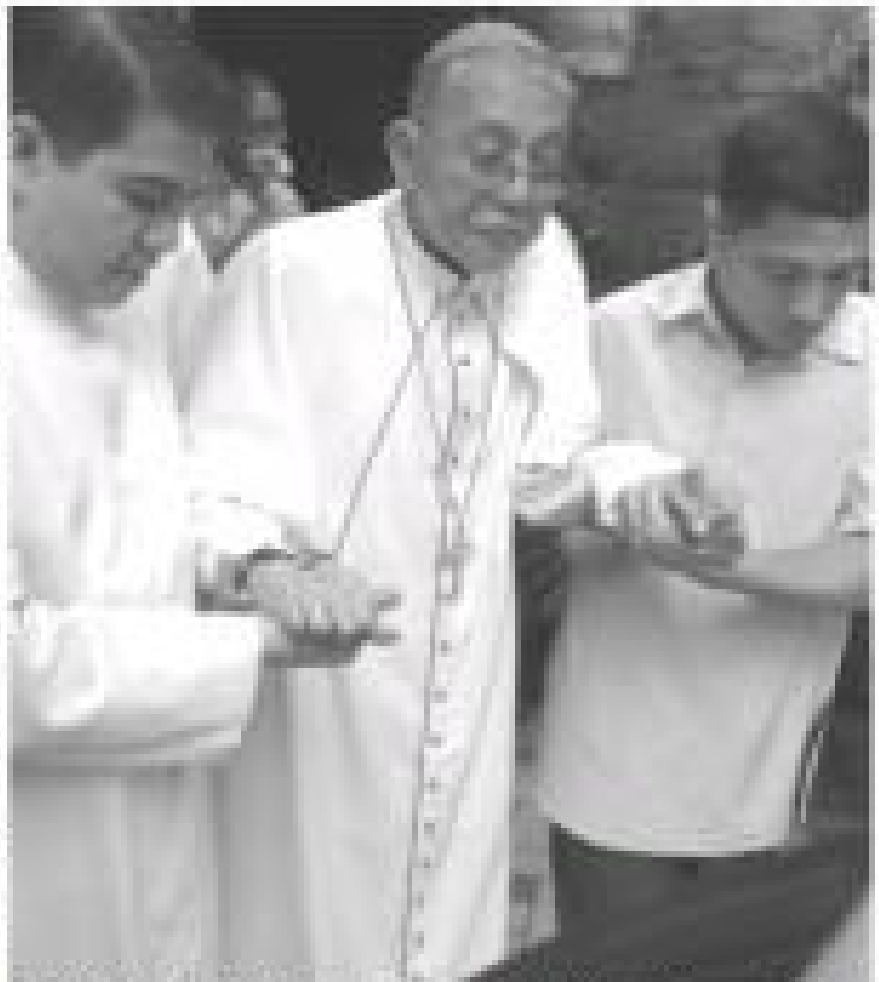
Critics

Although revered nationwide, Sin has come under severe criticism from Estrada supporters, mostly the poor, for ousting their idol.

After role of Chavit in fall of Estrada's Cabinet was named the presidential Palace on May 1, 2001, the cardinal issued an unprecedented apology to the poor.

He acknowledged that the church had emplaced them, making them easy prey for powerful people with their own agendas. He offered reconciliation and assured the poor the church is not "anti-Estrada, but pro-morality."

Asked once how he wished to be remembered, "As a happy priest," was his cheerful reply. Rhonda Ribera, with a report from AP



ABUNDS. Sin has said he will continue to be an active advocate for democracy. (AFP/ROSLAN RAHMAN)

One is enough, 2 too much under new Church rules

pastors on Sunday night.

The CBCP released the set of guidelines on sexual misconduct among priests, even as other scandals involving two bishops rocked the Catholic Church in the Philippines. All the bishops were directed to discuss the guidelines with priests under their jurisdiction.

The guidelines contained in an 18-page document, "Pastoral Guidelines on Sexual Abuses and Misconduct by the Clergy," also dealt with homosexual acts.

A priest found committing homosexual acts would be sent to a rehabilitation center run by the Church, but if the offense was happened the erring priest would be expelled or more, the guidelines said.

The new CBCP policy is an about-face immediately but it will not cover priests of heaven. The guidelines, which do not need the approval of the Vatican, will cover only the clergy in the Philippines.

The CBCP began drafting the guidelines in 1995, but it was forced to come up with the protocol in September after two prominent bishops caught this year were embroiled in sex scandals.

Bishop Crisostomo Yalong, head of the archdiocese of Agusdo, said the clergy also declaring two children in between in the Vatican also renewed Bishop Teodoro Bacani, head of the diocese of Novaliches and spiritual adviser of the El Shaddai movement, amid allegations that he sexually harassed his secretary.

During discussions by the country's 108 or so bishops, former CBCP president Oscar Cruz proposed a "one strike and you're out" policy.

Quevedo said the proposal, which would have resulted in the expulsion of priests who fathered a child, was rejected down by the bishops.

Under the new guidelines, a series of sexual abuse may file a complaint against any priest. Bishops, in turn, have "diocesan authority" on how to deal with the erring priest.

Any priest accused of sexual misconduct, however, may choose his case in the Vatican.

For the first time last year, the Church publicly apologized for sexual abuses committed by Filipino priests, but insisted that a majority of clergymen remained faithful to their vows.

Church officials admitted that some 200 priests had been investigated for sexual misconduct over the past 30 years. Some were defrocked, while most resigned voluntarily. With a report by AFP

Pinoy takes seat today as Seattle city council

By Percy D. Della
Correspondent

SACRAMENTO, California—David Della's chances as councilor of Seattle, Washington will be made official Wednesday (Thursday in Manila), making the 49-year-old son of Binalonan, Pangasinan the only Filipino to serve in a big city council in the mainland United States.

Della's feat in a United Goliath match with incumbent Heidi Wills on Nov. 4, is next to challenge congressional in California—the state council cited as the bellwether for political empowerment of Filipino Americans in the nation.

California has more Filipino Americans—about one million—compared to 465,000 as in Washington state. But California's Pinoys, unlike their compatriots in Washington and Hawaii, still have to produce a big city mayor, council member or state assembly person of their own.

Final vote totals to be certified by Washington's Secretary of State will show that Della, whose parents came from Ilocos Sur, garnered more than 54 percent of the votes to Wills' 45.6 percent. When translated to votes, Della beat the incumbent by less than 10,000 votes.

The erstwhile labor leader and currently executive of United Way, a charitable organization, will represent the people of District 2 Seattle—where he was born and raised. He becomes the first Filipino council member in Seattle's history since Dolores Sibonga was appointed, and then elected, on the city council in the early '90s.

Della's triumph not only resulted from a campaign that hammered his opponent's oversight of City Light—Seattle's version of the Manila Electric Company—during a period in which the utility raised rates by hit proportion. His victory proved to be the outcome of his behind-the-scene' feat for grass roots campaigning reminiscent of small town politicking in the Philippines.

While Wills, who collected about $250,000 in campaign contributions—more than any council candidate in Seattle history—purchased radio and TV time to win votes, Della's supporters went straight to the electorate.

Eschewing expensive broadcast time, Della's people invited prospective voters of all race and class to cheekbuckos or barbecues, dinner dances, basketball games, karaoke singing and even breakfasts with a Filipino delicacies—the signalog (short for a beef patty) fried two-egg combo).

Such a show of unity behind Della's candidacy and his friends' down-to-earth line on the hustings will be the envy of FIL-Am communities all over America. The experience drew praise from grizzled politicos of Seattle, one of America's top 20 cities in terms of population and among the 10 top most livable cities in the continental United States. It is a gateway port for Asian destinations, including the Philippines.

Two of these jaded politicos—former Mayor Norm Rice and State Sen. Adam Mc-Fik, a Filipino American serving in the Washington state house, endorsed Della, who served as Rice's deputy chief of staff. The Filipino candidate also received endorsements from the Seattle Northwest's biggest newspapers—the Seattle Times and the Seattle Post Intelligencer.

A familiar face in the Filipino community and something of a legend among cannery workers in a crusading union leader, Della paid tribute to the grass roots effort. David and his trustee wife Odette, who co-chaired his campaign said:

"We are very proud of our Filipino community—all of you who have been the backbone of this campaign from the start. Thank you for your faith, commitment, generous contributions and hard work."

"Looks like Filipinos voted this time," noted Manny Dizon, head of the influential Filipino-American Political Action Group of Washington—a group that played a pivotal role in getting out the vote for [him].

"The (Filipino volunteers) did a great job," added Glen Abellera, chief of the Washington governor's Olympia office with Asian American area.

Along with Wills, two other incumbents were down to defeat, rocking the city's political establishment. The last time three council incumbents were ousted in a single election was in 1931.

DELLA

Laws on gay rights urged

By Jerome Aning

Mindanao of gays and lesbians, Germany's top human rights official has urged the Philippine government.

Claudia Roth, German federal commissioner for human rights policy and humanitarian aid, said the best way was to pass laws upholding homosexuals' rights.

Roth represented West Germany and the European Union at the 22nd conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), a nine-day meet held in Manila and was concluded yesterday.

The 48-year-old former theater director noted that the Philippines was more open-minded than other Asian countries about the so-called "third sex," and more aware of the discrimination committed against that sector.

While lauding initiatives by some congressmen to pass a law on gay and lesbian rights, Roth warned that the proposed measure could be set back by "indoctrination" which, she said, was the real problem.

It was the first time that the ILGA conference was held in Asia, where the stigma against gays and lesbians is still greater than in the West. Nevertheless, the commissioner noted, European countries like the Netherlands or took a long time to pass such landmark laws as the one allowing same-sex marriages.

Homosexuality is not a question of culture or location, Roth stressed, and human rights should be universally guaranteed. She hoped the Philippines would support a resolution filed by Brazil before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the protection of gay rights—including those of bisexuals and transsexuals—all over the world.

The German official also praised President Macapagal-Arroyo's instructions on the draft penalty law, and the law itself should be repealed.

"It would be wonderful if the Philippines took the last step to legally abolish the death penalty," Roth said. "A democracy is considered strong if it doesn't see need for capital punishment."

She visited the Manila City Jail and thanked officials for being transparent, but expressed concerns about the overcrowding and putting minors and adults in same cells.

Roth urged the Philippines to fulfill its commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, saying violations of children's rights were "crimes against the country's future."

She witnessed feeling guilty that Germans and other Europeans are often the perpetrators of child abuse here, and pledged her country's continued support to the Philippines' efforts in curbing the situation.

Loren ready to fight Noli

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so said he would not to react to Legarda's statements.

De Castro said in a text message: "Let us just wait for May 2004."

He confirmed that Ms Macapagal was seriously courting him to be her running mate. He said the success in the Senate hinges on the President, through her emissaries, had been seeking a meeting with him as early as last month.

Only the other day he received five text messages, which requested earlier invitations for him to agree to a one-on-one meeting with the President.

Asked whether he was inclined to meet Ms Macapagal, he said: "She is the President, pa! Let's give her an chance. If the President requests a meeting with me, I will go."

He repeated the meeting to take place next week. "It doesn't mean I will agree to be (her vice president) at the meeting," he said. "I will just listen."

But De Castro admitted that the meeting's agenda would be politics, and nothing else. "That's what I think will be discussed. It certainly looks that way after receiving (his text) messages ... from only one source."

He said he could not agree to anything yet in the absence of a formal offer from the President. "I will study it first. That's my (main) answer."

The lawyer-lawmaker said the statements were "clues to the President," but not Gabriel Claudio, Joey Salgado, Mike Defensor or Fein Ginaliwonan Mike Arroyo.

Asked what would prompt him to finally seek higher office, he said: "Nothing yet. There's no sign. In the first place, I'm still unsure whether I will run or not. As I said, it's 50-50 (percent). And for what position, that's another 50 (percent)."

Lopez family

The top guns of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and its owners, the Lopez family, have yet to meet with him and give their support to any political campaign in 2004, according to De Castro.

He did not comment on allegations that the Lopez family was strongly pushing for a GMA-Eduardo tandem in exchange for concessions from broadcasting.

Legarda was cooking wrong if her former employer, ABS-CBN, supports the administration ticket.

"No problem for me if that will be the case. Anyway, it's the public which will decide the election, not the broadcasting network," she said.

Mixed reactions from Mindanao administration lawmakers greeted Malacañang's move to appoint De Castro as the running mate of Ms Macapagal. Mindanao is the turf of Sen. Gloria Macapagal, a stalwart of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats who is aspiring to be the running mate of the President.

Experience and popularity

Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) welcomed a GMA-Eduardo tandem, saying this is the "perfect candidate to the supposed Hardhead or Softhead of 1992 and Lozen." Pichay was referring to movie actors Fernando Poe Jr. and Legarda.

"GMA-Noli is the ideal combination of experience and popularity," Pichay said. "The 1992 Lozen is just all popularity."

A member of the campaign team of Ms Macapagal, Pichay said that with De Castro's strong showing in surveys, the administration ticket could "capture the imagination of the entire nation."

"Do we want to gamble our future on a ticket that can count only on popularity?" Pichay said. "The consensus of Lakas leaders is that we have a winning team in GMA and De Castro."

But Rep. Prospero Negrillo (Lakas, Davao City) noted with "caution and reservation" the reported effort to enlist De Castro, who is not even a member of Lakas.

Negrillo, the Lakas party whip for Mindanao, said that Mindanao lawmakers wanted a candidate from the South, preferably Bisdak. "I can't see any value added to Noli," Negrillo said. "There is no geography in a Gloria-Noli tandem."

Besides, "Noli's name is not transferable to Gloria," Negrillo said. "He can't draw crowd he calls but lacks experience in legislative and executive work." The congressman said, "Let's get from our own party and allies."

Representative Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) and Albayo Mercedes Lukban, Davao Oriental) said they preferred a Mindanaoan like Sarmiento for "geographical balance."

Desperation a driving Ms Macapagal to getting De Castro as her running mate, according to Surigao Rep. Pi Barcelona said Ms Macapagal is.

"She has to borrow the popularity of a television celebrity to try to clinch her election. She needs Noli de Castro to deodorize her opportunistic politics," Barcelona said. With reports from Tarlac Pedro, Christine Avenido in Manila and Sheryl Grylan, PDI General Luzon Bureau

Palace wooes Lopezes for the 'dream team'

Front page A1

Mario "Mel Mel" Jimenez to negotiate with Lopez in smoothen relations between Malacañang and the influential Lopez family, also the owner of the Manila Electric Co. and Meralco Securities Inc.

This was disclosed yesterday by a source in Ms Macapagal's camp a day after a top congressional leader revealed that the Palace was pushing for a team up between the Ms Macapagal and De Castro.

The source, who asked not to be named, said other members of the Lopez family were endorsing De Castro's possible team up with Ms Macapagal. Gabby Lopez is the "last holdout," according to the source.

"But (negotiation) is top of the top," the source said. Jimenez holds the rank equivalent to a Cabinet secretary and is in charge of "priority programs" and foreign-assisted projects. A seminary companion of the President in foreign and domestic travels, Jimenez has her say, the source added.

GABBY LOPEZ / The "last holdout," says a source. AFP

MEL MEL JIMENEZ / GMA classmate in delegated negotiator.

Some say that the latest toll increase in the North Luzon Expressway (which is being opposed by the Lopezes' Benpres Holdings) and the restraining order issued in favor of Manuel Wiser Services over part of the quid pro quo with the Lopezes. The court order placed Manuel under receivership, preventing creditors from suing its assets.

The source said: "Gabby has yet to be modified over what happened in the recent past," the source said. "Once Malacañang gets blessed, it's a go for a GMA-Eduardo ticket."

He recalled that the Lopezes were infuriated by purported attempts by Malacañang to take over Meralco in late 2002.

Finance Secretary Jose Camacho, a classmate of Gabby Lopez, prepared and submitted a memorandum of understanding to Lopez on Nov. 11, 2002 that purportedly provided for a takeover of Meralco. The proposal was made three days before the Nov. 15, 2002 ruling of the Supreme Court that ordered Meralco to reimburse to 3.4 million customers a total of P28 billion in overcharges.

Camacho had explained that the memorandum of understanding was meant to put up caretaker group for Meralco in light of its respective financial troubles because of the refund.

The government is the biggest shareholder of Meralco, owning 25 percent of its stocks, but management control is exercised by the Lopezes.

Meralco is chaired by Gabby Lopez's uncle Manuel "Meroks" Lopez, brother of the late Lopez patriarch Eugenio Lopez, Jr.

An Open Invitation to all

In celebration of the International Children's day—November 20, 2003, Youth Act 2003: Operation Day's Work, Philippines (Youth Act ODW) will kick off its campaign to support projects for the promotion on the rights of rural, indigenous, juvenile and terminally-ill children.

Come and join us in this celebration as we launch Youth Act ODW 2003 during the Social Development Week at the Glorietta Activity Center, Makati City.

All-day flash presentation on the Rights of the Filipino Children
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Youth Act ODW 2003 Launch
"Ceremonial shopping of coins, bills or checks to Youth Act Coin Bank"
6:00 – 7:30 pm

Youth Act 2003 is a nationwide event of youth empowerment and service, jointly organized by the National Youth Commission, Earthfest Foundation, Children's Hagnas Network, Make-A-Wish Foundation and Gawad sa Iyo. On 10 December 2003, thousands of high school and college students all over the country will be coming together to show this world that it's high to serve! Youth Act is all about young people—working together while having fun to help those in need! For more inquiries, get in touch with the National Youth Act Secretariat @ the following contact details: 636-3033 & youthact@yahoomail.com.

Dec. 24, 26, Jan. 2 are non-working days

Front page A1

thority of the President, declared Dec. 24 and Jan. 2 as special non-working days throughout the country in lieu of Dec. 30, Rizal Day, which shall be a regular working day. This order also applies to those working in the private sector.

The proclamation said Dec. 26, which falls on Friday, would be a special non-working day for government employees only.

This means that government employees will have 10-free days to celebrate the holidays. Their vacation leave on Dec. 24, a Wednesday, and will end on Jan. 4, Sunday. However, they have to report for work on Dec. 29 and 30 which fall on Monday and Tuesday.

Malacañang said the long Christmas holiday was meant to "spur domestic tourism throughout the country."

The proclamation said that private sector employers, except those providing banking, financial, health services and other vital services to the public, have the option not to require their employees to report for work on Dec. 26 and 27 (a Saturday) and on Jan. 3 (also a Saturday) next year provided they make arrangements to compensate for the off days.

It said the employers could increase the daily work hours to allow work on other days before or after the Christmas holidays "to ensure that daily paid workers are paid the equivalent of the wages or compensation that they would have earned on the said days and that production schedules are met to maintain a continuous supply of goods and services."

With rice glut, GMA orders palay subsidy

By Gil Cabuenegan Jr.

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the National Food Authority to help the country's rice farmers by buying their palay but not to a subsidized rate of P9 per kilo.

In an interview with GMA7 radio, the President said that in view of reports that palay prices have fallen sharply due to a robust harvest season, "the NFA has to intervene in the market."

"Instead of using the money to import rice, the NFA should be buying the palay harvest of our farmers and let the traders take care of the importations," the President said.

She said that was a reversal of role for the NFA, which used to import rice while the traders bought local palay. "This set-up should now be changed with the traders handling the importations and paying the duty of 50 percent," the President said.

Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo said the palay subsidy could cost the government "several billions of pesos" due to the surprisingly high yield of palay in the third quarter this year which pulled down its price to as low as P6 per kilo in some areas.

Lorenzo stressed that the palay oversupply was seasonal and that the NFA's intervention was meant to concentrate on the market for the country's farmers. Only registered farmers can avail themselves of the government subsidy for their palay which should meet the state's standards such as the maximum 14 percent moisture content.

The Department of Agriculture reported that the agriculture sector surged nearly 5 percent in the first 9 months this year partly due to strong palay and corn harvests.

Palay and corn harvests rose 1.39 percent and .85 percent in the first 9 months this year respectively, a turnaround from last year when both commodities slipped by over 1 percent during the same period. Rice harvest surged by 22 percent in the third quarter this year despite the bad weather.

Explain RSBS to soldiers, GMA tells AFP chief

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya to explain to officers and soldiers her government's efforts to bail out the financially troubled Armed Forces of the Philippines Retirement and Separation Benefits System which has long been a source of grumblings among the troops.

In a statement, Ms. Macapagal said: "The AFP Chief of Staff should explain to the situation to all soldiers so they will not be manipulated into believing those who are trying to sow dissension in the ranks."

In a Senate hearing Tuesday, military officials admitted that the AFP-RSBS fund sucked up P35 billion in unpaid obligations to creditors due to its huge portfolio of real estate investments that have gone sour.

"We are bent on getting RSBS back on track as one of the priorities of reform within the AFP but this will take time to be accomplished," the President said. "The RSBS has been bleeding since a long time ago and we inherited the problem from past administrations."

She noted that her administration had installed a professional board "to get the books right and we have ordered the big assets of RSBS sold so that we can augment the retirement pay of our soldiers which is being drawn from budget appropriations."

The government is currently eyeing several options to remunerate AFP-RSBS including the infusion of new capital into the fund and merger with the GSIS. — Gil Cabuenegan Jr.

The Daily Gospel

Thursday, November 20, 2003
33rd Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 1 Mac 2: 15-29
Gospel: Lk 19:41-44

When Jesus had come in sight of the city, he wept over it and said, "If only today you knew the ways of peace! But now your eyes are hid from seeing. For days will come upon you when your enemies will surround you with barricades and close in on you from every side, and they will dash you to the ground and your children with you, and leave not a stone within you, for you did not recognize the time and the occasion of your visit."

Commentary

"For you did not recognize the time and the occasion of your visit." Primitive religions, the greater emphasis on the efficacy of rites to find favor with the gods. Ancient religions would sacrifice animal blood, the Hindu would engage in the rituals of purification, the Buddhists would give precedence meditation and healing in Christianity, the greater stress is placed on the grace of God, it is God who takes the initiative and who visits man. Jesus, the Son of God, was sent by the Father in order to find the lost, the lost and the least of the sheep. But man has to respond to the initiative of God. Man has to acknowledge the visitation of God. God has to cooperate in order to be saved. Someone said that when we were created, God did not consult us but in order to be saved, we must give our consent and cooperation.

Introducing the new Microsoft Office System. With the shared workspace incorporated in Outlook 2003 and new products like One Note and Infopath, the new Office allows easy access to any information you need, anytime you need it.

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Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La on November 25 at 8 a.m.*

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3 suspects in kidnap of Coke exec arrested

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was seized Monday on his way to his office by gunmen who opened fire on his car after the apparently refused to open it, tearing her leg and arms, according to Reyes.

Her body was found early Tuesday on a seaside road in Parañaque. The apparently tried to crawl from her leg wounds, police said.

Relentless

President Macapagal-Arroyo assured the Filipino-Chinese community often the target of kidnap-for-ransom cases, that her government "will be relentless in hunting down" the kidnap gangs "until there is no longer pose a serious threat to public safety."

In a statement, the President expressed "deepest sympathy" to Sy's family. Ms Macapagal said she had directed Reyes "to get cracking and I want to see firm results before the year is over."

The President appointed Reyes last month to coordinate all law enforcement agencies involved in fighting the abduction problem that has led to the Philippines being dubbed as Asia's kidnap capital.

Sy's kidnapping and murder is the worst of the more than 130 abductions since this year, said Teresita Ang-See, leader of the watchdog group Citizens' Action Against Crime.

Ang-See said the kidnappers had demanded a P10-million ransom from Sy's family, but investigators and negotiations just hours after they seized her, suggesting the may have already died by then. She said the kidnappings were driving many potential investors because the law and order situation in the country had become "so unimaginable."

Dollies said his aunt promoted the soft drink to Reyes in his office in the headquarters of the Metro Manila Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response Group (Pnaer) in Camp Crame last year, sending afternoon. Reyes also heads Pnaer.

"We hope the arrest of the suspects and the immediate resolution of the case would somehow silence his critics," he said.

Before the suspects were presented to him, Reyes told reporters that the motive behind Sy's abduction and murder involved nothing beyond money.

After four motorcycle-riding Reyes led police to the house at No. 4 Mozart Ave., Sherville Park Subdivision, in Parañaque where they recovered the Toyota Tamaraw FX van (UFH-225) at around 4:30 a.m. The suspects dragged a bleeding Sy into the van right after they blocked the victim's Toyota Tercel in Quezon City.

Plastic bag

Henry Isnit, police proceeded to the Cavite-side house where they found Dilla and Bitool. Authorities, however, found no one when they barged into the nearby house at Lot 6, which was supposedly being rented by Sabas.

Sabas said it was in the second house where Nibb, Babes, and the rest of the gang wrapped Sy's body in a blanket then pruffled it to a black plastic garbage bag.

Quoting neighbors, the police official said Sabas left the house early Tuesday morning on the pretext that she would be attending an excursion.

The Pnaer group is composed of recruits from Metro Manila and other Luzon regions, mainly in Metro Manila for at least five years now, according to a Pnaer official.

Some of its members, he said, include ex-Cafgu members from the military and the police.

Reyes said there were indeed "bad eggs" from the Armed Forces, Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation who might be involved in criminal activities such as kidnapping.

"But it doesn't mean that these instructions are wrong," he told reporters.

The police official also asked for public help in investigating the abduction and killing of Sy. Bill Bonnie Reynaldo Wycoco said that while Pnaer would be handling Sy's murder, the bureau would help in the forensic tests, in the preservation of the suspects' clothes, in intelligence gathering and in the investigation itself.

In Angeles City, the Filipino-Chinese community mourned the murder of Sy. "We grieve for her. And many of us are asking why she had to be killed," Freddie Ta, president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in the city, said.

The community, he said, had been more vigilant since Sy's murder. With report by Tom Lobo Jr. Salaverria in Manila and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

POLICE investigators inspect the body of Betti Chua Sy after it was found wrapped in a blanket and garbage bag near the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard in Parañaque City Tuesday

SUSPECTS Ernesto Pula and Roman Dimal in the kidnap-murder of Betti Sy are now detained in Camp Crame.

VAN used in the Betti Sy kidnapping

Critics question Reyes' ability

Transcribed text

grisly crime, the source said.

"We understand the urgency of the situation, but the least that we [can] could do is to stay calm and coordinate on the job at hand," he said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Reyes "should be held responsible" for the failure of the government to curb this kind of incidents and should him to "leave his post."

"The brutal slaying of Mr Sy and the increasing incidence of kidnapping cases should serve as challenge to [Reyes] to pursue his assignment," Drilon said. "He must either change or step out."

GMA support

President Macapagal-Arroyo defended her appointment of Reyes as task force head, saying: "He is the man for the job because he already knows the capability of the armed forces, he has already included them in the team composed of policemen."

The President, who has claimed success in crushing down on a number of kidnap-for-ransom gangs under her term, reaffirmed the NBITF last month with Reyes, who also heads the government's anti-terrorist campaign, as its head.

"Let us give him a chance because [kidnapping cases] have dropped since he took over," she said in an interview with radio dzRH yesterday. The President said her spokesperson could not come up with direct feedback on the claim.

Her remark that the Sy kidnapping was the first case under Reyes' watch seemed puzzled.

The police official also vowed Reyes' inability to effectively "neutralize" the government's no-ransom policy.

During interviews, Reyes often stated that the government will never pay a single centavo to kidnap syndicates in order to deter other criminal groups from stepping into this "lucrative" operations, but he failed to elaborate on the policy, the source said.

Reyes, he explained, should have considerably emphasized that while the families of some victims might be willing to pay ransom, authorities would still not be involved in the negotiations if only to establish contact with the perpetrators.

"Once a ransom is established," he said, "it would be easier for us to track down these syndicates, arrest them, and hopefully recover the ransom money."

Despite Reyes' "shortcomings," the official said all those would soon pass once the former admiral chief "learned the ropes" in anti-kidnapping operations and "adjusted his style to that of his subordinates."

"We know he's a very capable leader and under his watch, we can only hope that the NBITF could finally eliminate the kidnapping menace in the country," he said.

Drilon challenged Reyes to "go beyond mere statements before the media." He said: "The entire nation is watching him. We will watch him perform."

CAAC warning

Mr Macapagal's claim of gains in law administration's anti-kidnapping efforts contrasted sharply with the report of Investigating Service, spokesperson of the private watchdog Citizens Action Against Crime.

In an interview yesterday at the Sheridlle City Hall, Atty. See-Ople claimed that over 130 persons have been kidnapped in of October (roughly one kidnap victim every three days), and the figure was substantially higher than that of last year.

Earlier, Ang-See reported that one kidnapping incident took place in the country every day, while more than 100 cases by the end of October, including, on the other hand, rescued 65 cases.

"We are not just talking of numbers, but shattered lives. The time for talks and appeals to the government is over," she said.

She warned of "very consequences" if the kidnapping problem remains unresolved. Businessmen, she said, complained of being unable to focus on their work because of the trauma of having to "constantly watch their backs" every time they left their homes.

"We are becoming counterproductive. And the young people who could potentially contribute to the country would pack their bags and leave because of the fear for their lives," she said.

Ang-See cited Reyes to "produce and punish the people who did this, and there might be a semblance of hope." She lamented: "How many more deaths before we find them (kidnappers)?"

The President assured the Chinese-Filipino community that "we will be relentless in hunting down the remaining kidnap-for-ransom gangs until there no longer pose a serious threat to public safety."

"I ask for continuing cooperation and trust," she said.

Lacson

Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday said Reyes was not fit to be the anti-kidnap czar, a position that the opposition leader once held during the Estrada administration.

Interviewed over a program hosted by Ernesto Maceda over dwIZ, Lacson said Reyes' forte was more in "community relations" than police work.

He also said that in the first place, Reyes was appointed to that position by Malacañang so as to "mollify" him after being "unceremoniously" booted out as secretary of national defense. With reports from CBC Cebu reporter, Christine G. Avendaño and Inquirer Zamboanga

Pinoys sing 'My Way' amid gunfire in Iraq

Transcribed text

According to Bambenggs, peacekeepers from other nations have also been testing their voices on the weak Australian stereo. Some that offers a selection of up to 3,000 English songs and gives out a score on one's singing.

"All the coalition forces who are fond of singing—like Spanish, the Latin Americans and the Americans—go in our base to borrow our mike," Bambenggs said at a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

Apart from singing, the Filipino peacekeepers also spend Dick Tino Glee watching movies on DVD, jogging, basketball or playing table tennis at the sports facilities of their countries, according to Bambenggs.

The Filipino peacekeepers, composed of 55 soldiers, 26 policemen and 15 health workers, share quarters in a two-story building in Al Hilla, capital of Babil, 80 km south of Iraq.

Filipino policemen are training border guards, while the soldiers and health workers are conducting "needs analysis surveys" and forwarding them to the headquarters of the US-led coalition in Baghdad.

Bambenggs, however, said a security wave of attacks by insurgents on coalition forces had prompted the Filipino contingent to be more vigilant.

"Every time we go out, we'll have our Kevlar helmet, our body armor. We're not sure about our safety, but the 9th Iglesia are doing all right," Bambenggs said.

"Because a high ... that you can't guarantee 100 percent security because terrorists strike anytime," he added.

So far, no Filipino peacekeeper has been hurt in any attack.

"There's nothing to be alarmed about," he said. "Our troops are relatively safe."

Bambenggs said Filipino peacekeepers had not encountered any resistance and had been welcomed by the local populace.

"Judging by the acceptance of the local grassroots, we believe the Philippine mission is succeeding," he said.

However, other coalition forces may soon miss the singing voices of Filipino peacekeepers in the desert.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said Tuesday that the Philippines would consider withdrawing its troops from Iraq if the security situation does worsen.

But Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said there were no plans to pull the contingent out now, despite a rise in terror attacks on coalition forces.

Mr. Macapagal said security conditions in Iraq are being continually assessed. "We will ensure that our nationals will be kept out of harm's way and will be immediately evacuated if called for by the shifting situation," she said.

Speaking from a meeting last Tuesday with Philippine spiritual envoy to Iraq Roy Cimatu and Bambenggs, Ople said: "We are in Iraq to help the Iraqi people in compliance with the United Nations Security Council. We'll stay on."

He dismissed as "conspiracy nonsense" reports in the local media that the Philippines would withdraw following a string of deadly bombings.

Ople said the Philippine government intended to proceed with its planned full deployment of 170 peacekeepers.

"And on top of that, we planned send more, resource allowing, as a total of 300 personnel," he said, even as he admitted that safety remained a primary concern.

Cimatu and Bambenggs said Filipino were assigned in a relatively safe, coastal south area of operation, outside the more dangerous "Sunni triangle." With reports from Jerome Aning and AP

ENTERTAINME

Editor Louie C. Camino

Mariah staying till Sunday

By Marinel R. Cruz

INSTEAD of flying off to New York City last Thursday, international pop diva Mariah Carey hied off to Aeropuerto in Palawan.

Mariah, who held a one-night show at the Fort open field in Taguig, will stay in the exclusive resort until Sunday, according to Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) assistant general manager Angel Arcadio.

Mariah traveled for Singapore Airlines flight in New York City on Nov. 17, but his 20-min coverage left Manila at 1 p.m. on that day via China Airlines, Arcadio told Inquirer Entertainment yesterday.

She flew to Palawan onboard a private plane, and was accompanied only by her manager and two bodyguards, Arcadio added.

Aeropuerto is on the private island of Pamalican, 200 km east of Palawan.

Guests from Manila are flown in to the island by a chartered plane, which lands directly on Pamalican.

The exclusive resort supposedly charges each guest between $600 and $1,000 per night.

"Owners of the place (pricier) strictly screening," said Joselle Bonato, Inquirer correspondent in Palawan.

Only guests are allowed to roam around the resort, Bonato said. Hired entertainers are screened to their cause, she added.

Hollywood personalities who had visited the resort are rump model Naomi Campbell and award-winning actors Robert de Niro and Tom Cruise.

Mariah performed in Manila for the first time last Sunday as part of her "Charmbracelet Tour 2003." Manila was the last leg of her six-city tour.

The singer will reportedly pass through another international airport when she returns to the United States on Sunday to avoid a repeat of an incident at the Nido Centennial Terminal when she arrived last Saturday.

The singer's body guards sent out of the Nido's presidential lounge airport general manager Edgardo Manalo and other airport officials while the singer researched her make-up.

"Our intention was just to give her VIP treatment," Manalo said in an earlier interview with the airport press.

"It's part of our Filipino hospitality to make sure everything is okay and (ensure that celebrities) are welcome here in Manila."

Manalo said that he instructed airport personnel not to give VIP treatment to Mariah and her entourage, which included back-up dancers, singers and band members, when they left Naia last Monday.

They joined the queue at the departure counter and personally checked in their baggage, Manalo said.

Another American singer, Mandy Moore, arrived in Manila on Monday to perform today, at 8 p.m., at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

PAMMAH checks out in world-class resort in Palawan before she leaves the country on Sunday.

Tagalized "24" replace telenovelas on ABS-CBN

By Cibee M. Palumbarit
Contributor

BEFORE the innovative series "24" aired on the cable channel AXN, it was already being shown on RPN 9 as a weekly series starting June 2002.

But only 12 episodes saw the light of day and there was no purported loop without the first season actually being finished.

For viewers who neither caught that or its current AXN broadcast because the channel vanished from certain cable providers, or for those who have not seen the show on DVD, the cash-strong first episode will finally be shown on free TV in its entirety.

Starting last Monday, "24" was aired on a daily basis, weeknights at 8:30 p.m. on Channel 2. But there will be a major difference: It is dubbed in Filipino, like the Jennifer Garner-starrer hit action series "Alias" was when it debuted locally.

The show stars Kiefer Sutherland as Jack Bauer, head of a subdivision of the CIA, the CTU, or Counter Terrorist Unit.

Bauer must protect a leading presidential candidate, African-American senator David Palmer (Dennis Haysbert) from a planned assassination attempt in California on election day. The plot might involve undercover agents in his organization.

"24" is spread over 24 episodes, seen in "real-time," an hour each of Jack Bauer's most eventful day on the job yet. There 24 hours comprise one long subplot filled with Counter Intelligence error not only for him and the presidential hopeful, but also for his wife and teenage daughter, who get caught in the tangled web of dangerous events.

The Tagalized version was recently launched over a press lunch at ABS-CBN. Its pilot episode was unveiled, and in real-time fashion, the gaps between ads meant for commercials were filled with exclusive pre-recorded commentary from Sutherland, made especially for persons-in-question.

Sutherland enjoys playing the flawed character, a husband who was trying to make his marriage work, and who has special duties to perform.

"I think all of us, to some degree, have issues of trying to balance our responsibilities for work and family, and to somehow find a happy medium that is going to please both. It's a dilemma that I thought was interesting to play on," Sutherland said.

SUTHERLAND

The actor's career was revived with the groundbreaking series, which was among the best TV show category nominees of the Golden Globe awards last year. He was also nominated as best actor in a television drama category and won the award.

"24" is currently on its 3rd season in the US.

Sutherland says that the most challenging aspect is making "24" is trying to maintain a level of suspense over a long period of time. "Television is such a different beast from feature films in the ways that you truly get a sense of what an audience is experiencing, while you're making the show. You try to hear off their feedback, and the one thing that the audience consistently keeps through was the suspenseful nature of the show."

ABS-CBN's Cindy de Leon, vice president for creative communications, said the foreign series is a worthy and extremely anticipated temporary replacement for the time slot left by the telenovelas "Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay" and "Umaaraw ang Disyembre."

"To sum of replace them, we will be having the exciting show on weeknights, from November 17 to (one) half of December," De Leon said.

"24 has a new concept. It's got suspense and action that should appeal to fans of telenovelas. We're also trying to attract more male viewers during the block. It's also very relevant because the lead character practices strong family values, while being torn between them and his very difficult job," she added.

Vice president for programs acquisition and marketing director of Studio 23, Len Katigbak revealed that the voice talents chosen to dub the series were screened carefully to match the original cast members' voices. He said some of the voice talents were also tasked to translate the dialogue into Filipino.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Guaso

Pageantry, protests greet Bush in London

LONDON—Amid royal pageantry and antiwar protests, US President George W. Bush is defending the invasion of Iraq as a necessary use of military power while likening reconstruction efforts to rebuilding a shattered Europe after two world wars.

Queen Elizabeth II was greeting Bush on Wednesday at Buckingham Palace to open a state visit, giving an official welcome to the American leader.

Stephen James Osborn, the queen's London custodian, also saw a focal point for demonstrators bitterly opposed to the Iraq war. They dreamed "Manhood" and "You are not welcome!" as Bush's helicopter feared him to the palace Tuesday night.

Even speeds at Whitehall Palace, Bush was working to puncture what he views as misconceptions on this side of the Atlantic about America's use of force. He was subtly invoking Europe's history of appeasement of dictators, said the price Europeans paid for their governments' inaction, aides said.

Bush was explicitly reminding European about the critical work the allies did to set postwar Germany on the path to democracy, a process the Bush administration and the British are trying to accelerate today in Iraq.

In many as 100,000 people were preparing to march through London to protest the Iraq war and occupation, a fresh sign of the opposition that swept through much of Europe in the run-up to the invasion and has deepened for many Europeans since.

Bush's visit to Britain dominated broadsheet newspapers in the country on Wednesday morning. Headlines concentrated on the unprecedented level of security surrounding the visit, with The Times of London's front page leading with "President's needle from Famous Britain." Inside, many newspapers carried pictures of policemen carrying submachine guns, a rare sight in Britain.

On the first full day of a 3 1/2-day trip to England, Bush was trying to reframe Europeans' perceptions of American military might. He wants to carry Britons like Ann Bailey (5), who scrapped theft to the gas-slinging heroism of the Old West.

"This country's just enough room to pour," Bailey said outside Buckingham Palace, where she was one of about 100 protesters who booed of Bush as his helicopter touched down Tuesday night. "You American just feel 'Ugh.' 11. Maybe you had to get Saddam, but it's got nothing to do with us British."

THE USS Vandegrift on Wednesday docks at Ho Chi Minh City, the first American warship to visit Vietnam since the end of the bloody conflict nearly 30 years ago. AFP

JI chief has direct links to al-Qaida

JAKARTA—The purported new military chief of a Southeast Asian terror group is among a handful of Indonesians in direct contact with al-Qaida and is now considered the most lethal terrorist in Asia, planning fresh attacks in the region, officials said.

Farouq, as Zulkarnaen, the high-ranking Jemaah Islamiyah leader still on the loose is believed to head an elite squad that helped carry out a suicide bombing at a Jakarta hotel that killed 12 people. Police in Bali, US and Indonesian officials said.

Zulkarnaen held a meeting in Manila on the May island of Jolo back with two other senior militants to plot upcoming attacks against Western hotels and banks in Southeast Asia, a senior Philippine military source told Reuters. Zulkarnaen's hotels and banks in Southeast Asia, a senior Philippine military source told Reuters. Zulkarnaen's hotels and banks in Southeast Asia, a senior Philippine military source told Reuters.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2003

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

DEFLECTOR

Gloria okays P111-M SEAG budget

MELINDA MACAPAGAL

By Mon Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Arroyo has approved a whopping P111-million budget for the country's participation in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games on Dec. 5-12.

This was revealed by the chief disbursing agency, Philippine Sports Commission, yesterday as it green-lighted the country's drive to win 48 to 60 gold medals and place third overall.

PSC executive director Ed Hayco said they are expecting the money to be released within the week although it is not clear yet where Malacañang would get the amount. Sources said Malacañang would get it from the Presidential contingency fund.

PSC officials said the amount was by far the highest ever allocated for the biennial meet, considering that the agency earlier reported the budget to be just P90 million.

The Philippine Olympic Committee first estimated it to cost a little over P80 million.

Hayco said sending 500 delegates and members to Vietnam would cost P70 thousand, including plane fare, accommodation and allowances.

But Hayco said the amount (P111M) includes equipment which would end up also from the budget considering that the country will send 449 athletes if not 20 sports disciplines and 209 coaches and officials.

Sports officials said the President's gesture only gave a strong statement to the athletes as perform better compared with their dismal win in the 2001 Kuala Lumpur edition where they landed fifth overall with 11 golds, 41 silvers and 67 bronzes.

This year, the Philippines will have to duel with competitors who have improved by leaps and bounds like Malaysia and host Vietnam, which is counting on new sports it has included in this year's calendar. Thailand and Indonesia, of course, remain the top contenders.

The Philippines' best finish in the meet was second to the 1991 Manila edition where it captured 91 golds.

Phone Pals oust Barakos

By Jurdin Montano

Alfi Tenorio was a marked man throughout, but two bad shot from Barako's forgot all about Dominic Caramell.

Caramell sizzled in the fourth quarter, pumping in 15 of his game-high 19 points as Talk N Text eliminated rival Red Bull Barako, 95-85, from the semifinals of the Samsung PBA Invitational Conference last night at the Philsports Arena.

Caramell's heroics got overshadowed by the tragedy that befell Alaska Aces proprietor the late Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr.

Word circulated from Magnolia's camp after Jeremiah Trotter hit him hard with a clothesline just as the rookie playmaker was about to dribble out of harm's way in the final 46.8 seconds.

Alaska was later brought to the Medical City for examination. Talk N Text officials expected a broken cartilage on Magsaysay's nose.

"I felt really bad about what happened to Jeremy. It's totally unselfish. It has no place in the league," said Talk N Text coach Joel Banal.

"The other penalty is okay on Trotter, I guess it's going to be the commissioner's call. I believe the commissioner is a fair and honorable man and he will make the right decision," he added, referring to PBA Commissioner Noli Eala.

Eala said Trotter, who was thrown out of the court for that dastardly act, would definitely be fined for declined to reveal the figures.

Tenorio, with 18 points and 17 rebounds, got hotlined up by the Bossman in the fourth for Caramell name to the Phone Pals' corps.

It 'will be the 'Phone Pals' around tonight also in the conference semifinals while the Bossman relinquished the third straight playoff after finishing the last three conferences as the No. 1 team in the eliminations round.

TNT will meet the winner between Coca-Cola and Sunkist in a best-of-five semifinal series beginning Sunday.

Viva eyes 2nd win

VIVA Mineral Water (VIZ) tries to score a second straight win when it battles RCTI La Salle at 1:45 p.m. today in the 2003 PBL Fleetmate Cup at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Having stopped a two-game skid, reigning Metro titlists to go all-out against the Archers, who are also seeking a second straight victory following last-dose breaking debuts.

Meanwhile, Petrochem takes on Sunkist CEST at 3:45 p.m.

The Water Boys posted an easy 77-46 victory over Sunkist CEST last Tuesday as they bombarded the foes' zone with 16 of their 20 points at the expense of the three-time titlists.

Coach Boy Sanad knows how dangerous the Archers are but he's confident his boys are up to the task.

"We have to elevate our game a notch higher and play a lot harder to win again," said Sanad.

The Archers will also fire up to the court with renewed confidence after posting a 68-66 overtime win over Utah last Saturday.

CAGE WAR

Fiba backs Tiny's group

By Dennis U. Erro

FOLLOWING the stand of its president, the central board of the ruling International Basketball Federation (Fiba) has reiterated its full support to the Tiny Lizard-led Basketball Association of the Philippines even as it expressed regrets on the ongoing cage war in the country.

In a short but precise response to Lizard's earlier letter avoiding the secrets of the Basketball Association of the Philippines Inc. to seize control, secretary general Patrick Baumann said the world's governing body in basketball is solidly behind BAP.

"The Fiba Central Board, at its recent meeting in Madrid, has taken the view that the relationship of your federation as an affiliated member of Fiba remains unchanged from our perspective," Baumann wrote in his letter dated Nov. 14 from the Fiba headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Clear stand

Baumann said there is no reason he'll have more into discussions that are currently being held in the Philippines because of its clear stand. Fiba president Carl Clifton Muttly had earlier sent out a letter of his full support to yesterday's poll.

Baumann, however, stressed that the Central Board "regrets that basketball is once more in the negative spotlight in the Philippines."

ANGELO Que and his girlfriend partner Tracy Lozada reading their line of putt on the 14th green.

U-BIX PRO-AM

Gerard-JR duo shares lead

By Joey Arcano

BACK to the competitive fairways after a two-year absence, Gerard Canada made up for lost time by joining hands with in-form JR Tangonan for a three-over-par 74 yesterday and a share of the lead with the Ruel Soliares-Marvin Dumandan tandem in the opening round of the P1.2 million U-Bix National Pro-Am at the Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club.

The 38-year-old Canada, the former amateur standout who's now a full-time coaching pro at Wack Wack, and the free-robed Israel Tangonan, 33, mowed a bad stretch of three bogeys on a four-hole stretch from the 13th with an exploitative finish that saw them shoot two copy birdies on the last four holes.

On a day when no one from among the 97-team roster dare to shoot par 71 of the famed holes-Langer layout, national player Dumandan used his hosted edge of his home course to help his partner Soliares get on the top.

The Dumandans were a stroke ahead of Farhad Ginthagra-Bobby Gilgo and Jorge Abad-Michael Gibo while 2001 champions Noli Erespin and Uwe Erwin Weiland tied for fifth spot with Lito and Tony Tepulon at 76.

The defending champion Wilson Sandalero, Raul and Raul, fell five strokes off the lead after carding a 79.

Canada came very close to winning the event when the event was still known as the Ruel Pro-am in 1995. But tumped and his pre-partner, the now-retired Rudy Lubiano, lost in a playoff to Dioscoro Lapeñas and nephew Antonio, who was still then an amateur.

Though lacking in practice rounds, Canada believes the ultimate test for him was given a "pure stress golfer" like him a chance against the scoring pros.

"I've not been playing since I went to serious teaching, but I made a promise to JR to host the partnership we were supposed to forge last year and we're happy to be in the lead," said Canada, who last played a tournament two years ago in the Philippine Open at Valero Wack.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo Carillo and Willie Bedada topped the pro-am side event held Tuesday with a net 63.

Tournament sponsors are U-Bix Noah Capital Capitals, Epson Printers, 21 One Pico Digital Digital setups, S-Net's Bento GSE Pico Pinoy, Kingpin's, Cafe Appendiseum, Nike Golf (Footprint), 101, Worldwide Express/WWEX Express, Airlift Asia, ESASIA, Pagcor, PAGC, Toyota Motors, San Miguel Corp. and Bonne Corp.

Martial arts tilt slated Dec. 27 at Philsports

THE BEST mixed-up fighters from various self-defense schools in the country take center stage during the "Mano Mano" full contact martial arts competition on Dec. 27 at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

Dubbed, "Ultimate ng mga Ultimate" by the organizing CDSG, the event will showcase the best in full-contact stand-up fighting using the fists, knees, feet and elbows that will be covered with protective pads. The fighters will use standard boxing gloves.

"Mano Mano" also marks the debut of Japan's K-1, a professional kickboxing tournament that has gained huge following in America and Europe.

Using the modified version of the K-1 rules, the event features traditional martial arts like kung-fu, karate, taekwondo, pentjak silat, kembara muay thai, boxing, alongside Filipino-based styles like kali, juno-jutsu, sambo, kali-kadena and escrima.

"Mano-Mano will showcase not only combat skills but the art and discipline that define a true martial artist. After all, a real warrior is one who does not go out looking for a fight," said CDSG event director, Ed Encinas.

The event, touted as by far the most fan-friendly in Philippine sports, offers a total cash pot of P50,000, making it the biggest ever local martial arts competition in terms of prize money.

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Aguilar rules Mayor's Cup

CALOOCAN PITCHER Gilmar Aguilar tossed two-hit shutout as Caloocan City defeated Malabon City, 3-0, in the Mayor's Cup baseball tournament at the Caloocan City Sports Complex in Caloocan City yesterday.

Aguilar struck out 10 batters in seven innings to lead Caloocan City to victory.

Caloocan City will face Valenzuela City today at 4 p.m. in the championship game.

Ozamiz repulses MayniLA 5

OZAMIZ CITY – Ozamiz City defeated Manila, 5-3, in the Mayor's Cup baseball tournament at the Ozamiz City Sports Complex in Ozamiz City yesterday.

Ozamiz City will face Manila today at 4 p.m. in the championship game.

Mercado, pal shine

PBA members Benjie Mercado and Judith Mercado of the Philippines added another feather to their cap by winning three gold medals in the 6th Asian Masters Athletics Championships in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Mercado won the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and 400-meter dash events.

Judith won the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash and 400-meter dash events.

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OPINION

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Recovery

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday ended a 12-year saga of delays as the government's efforts to recover the secret assets of the Marcos family with a final decision holding that $658 million in Swiss bank deposits of the Marcoses are ill-gotten and belong to the Republic of the Philippines.

The ruling rejected the Marcoses' petition seeking reconsideration of the Court's decision of July 15, 2003, forfeiting in favor of the government the $658 million held in escrow at the Philippine National Bank. With characteristic dexterousness, the Court, in a unanimous resolution, paved the way for the government takeover of the fund. The decision marked for the first time the application of the notion of accountability on the Marcos family for illegal wealth accumulation during the Marcos dictatorship.

It took 17 years, since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, before the government succeeded in laying claim to the Marcos wealth.

The resolution is the last in a chain of decisions of the Court that favor public interests against the claims of private interests, and these decisions include the 2001 landmark ruling which held that the euro levy funds were "public in character." A year later, the Sandiganbayan, ending a 16-year legal hassle with business tycoon Eduardo de Cojuangco, a Marcos crony, decided that Cojuangco had illegally acquired the United Coconut Planters Bank with coconut levy funds and forfeited his shareholdings in the bank in favor of the government.

The Court's resolution on the Marcos funds back despairs affirms the rule of the Court as giant killer to the legal battles between the state and entrenched private wealth: one issues on which the government has laid a claim on behalf of larger public interests.

In the resolution, the Court delivered a strong blow against delaying tactics, which the Marcoses used to the fullest. The Court held that the "Republic has a right to speedy disposition of this case," adding that "the people ... are entitled to favorable judgment, free from vexatious, capricious and oppressive delays, the vehemency objective being to restore the ownership of the Swiss deposits to the rightful owner, the Republic of the Philippines, within the shortest possible time."

President Macapagal-Arroyo understood the decision to mean that the Court had decided that the Marcos wealth "is for the use of the farmers." The Court's motion cleansed the way for funneling the wealth to finance the land reform program. It rejected an injunction clamped on the Marcos funds by US Judge Manuel Real who in ruled in the 1990s $2 billion in damages from the Marcos estate to 9,539 victims of human rights abuses during the Marcos regime.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government need into the decision more than the end of a protracted struggle to recover at least part of the Marcos wealth. The resolution not only attacked Real's freeze order, which blocked the use of the funds for the land reform program. It meant, according to the PCGG, "our people will recover more than just $658 million stolen from them. With this decision, our people will recover the dignity stolen from them by the Marcos dictatorship and its cronies. ... Filipinos can now cast off the enslaving moment of letting 17 years go on without Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos ever being held to account for corruption."

The resolution places the Marcos Swiss deposits beyond the pale of compromise settlements, which the Marcos family had sought in addition to putting up a sustained legal fight to keep control of the funds. Coming amid the cull of the President for "total reconciliation" with political adversaries, the Court's ruling in effect excludes the Marcos assets as a negotiable item in seeking reconciliation with the Marcoses. The ruling lets put a taboo sign on the use of Marcos assets for political deals.

Illusion

Foreign Comment

AFTER THE RECENT national election, some observers argued that a two-party system was clearly visible in Japan, but that was an empirical illusion.

The Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled for all but 11 months of the past 50 years, still dominates, and the ostensible opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, is a hollow house for disillusioned LDP politicians and an unholy alliance of the extreme left and extreme right.

To understand enlightenment tutorials follow [illegible].

The Times (London)

An interesting afternoon at the Batasan

Commentary

Joseph Gilay Bayod
Attitude to Church and local issues

Bill' mother, a senior citizen, is proud and happy as that Congress respected the Supreme Court's decision declaring the second impeachment case against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. unconstitutional, like a proud and happy mother she was there outside the Batasan Complex together with hundreds of anti-impeachment leftists while the members of the House of Representatives were debating their stand on the Supreme Court ruling.

Mother is no ordinary citizen. Indeed, she is not very political; she rarely talks about politics. She's a retired elementary teacher and one who has been contented with taking care of her garden in our house in Cagayan de Oro City where life is still relaxed. Me had some to Manila only a week earlier to have an eye check up because she has had vision in her left eye.

So it was such a surprise to me when she said she was going to answer to a rapporteur I had made in order that she go with me to the city. She said she was disgusted that our congressmen, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, was one of the supporters of the impeachment complaint. My roommate jokingly reminded her to bring an umbrella to shield us from Malacañan rockfalls or from the water that Erap was alleged to dispose protesters. But she was undaunted.

Overcoming my surprise and hesitation, I decided to bring her along, hoping that the experience would give her some political education and maybe empower her in some way indeed, seeing other people take to the streets to fight for their constitutional rights instead of remaining indifferent like our country dictating control issues in the comfort of home or classroom alone we have. Also, being in the actual places where important events are happening make the events and issues surrounding them more real and close.

But I didn't mind "selfish" reasons for bringing her along. Although she had never imposed her wishes on me, she has yet to completely understand what I am doing. She has yet to understand why her son is not doing what her friends' children are doing: working in respectable nine-to-five offices and driving their own cars. I was hoping that by bringing her along, she would understand what I am doing and the issues that matter to me. Besides, since I left home after high school, we rarely spent time together.

We joined the protesters from various groups and universities and walked to the Batasan Complex from St. Peter's Church in Commonwealth. She was dragging to me like I used to drag to her when I was a child.

While we were moving, I promised not to buy the imposing headquarters building where the pleaded case against ousted President Estrada is being heard as well as the area where poor families used to live until the government demolished them for the sake of EDSA President George W. Bush.

I also pointed out to her the various people who were there: "That one is Fr. Robert Reyes, the running priest and that one is right pious...believe it or not...is Dr. Lorenzano, the president of Mapúa College," etc. I also introduced her to several Ateneo friends, so she need not watch for her son was in good/?/ company.

But I was taken aback because I found that it was Inquirer Columnist speaking to us. She had once been very exuberant in conversation. She said she was her and my father's favorite singer. And she sang so proudly happy when Cardinal Sin sang a song written by the anti-conjugal crusader/?/Bonaventura.

After Cardinal's song, my mother turned over to me. She listened intently to coconut farmers from various provinces take turns to denounce Rep. Eduardo Cojuangco and his ministers in Congress. She listened to leaders from various peace groups, talked on Congress's song and, lacking and musical souls for the poor. She listened to student leaders from various universities take turns in explaining that while they were not against the investigation of corruption, they were against the constitutional impeachment and that while the leading personalities in the impeachment case were running congressmen, they did not represent the true ideals of the Filipino youth.

Like the rest of the rallyists, my mother also succumbed herself from laughing at the political leaders especially presidents and life. It's the proximity of the pro-impeachment rallyist to us, even as hundreds of policemen stood between the two opposing groups.

We were home very tired, and I am thoroughly sure that she suffered from pain, but it was not a bad afternoon at all. We had discovered a new way of passive-child bonding and I found a way to make myself better understood by my mother. And of course, the experience was made more memorable when our son on TV the next day showed pictures of Congress to respect the Supreme Court decision.

It is difficult to know what my mother is thinking about the whole experience now... what she felt, saw (with her right eye), heard and smelled. But the days she were her remaining more interesting than the new transmission to tell my father, brothers, sisters and nephews when she gets back home. It's not clear what she means exactly by interesting, but certainly issues of justice, rule of law, good leadership, preservation of democracy, corruption, poverty and social inequity shaped by it interest to every Filipino, young and old alike.

Waiting for FPJ

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE RUMORS were that he would be announcing his candidacy three weeks ago. Well, that was what he himself suggested last October. He said he would consult with the people, not necessarily with the spirits—during All Souls' Day to know if he should run or not.

That was more than a fortnight ago. Did he agitate on it? Was the moment inappropriate, the country being rendered by turmoil and distraction for several weeks?

I personally am still disappointed Joseph Bernardo Poe Jr. would heed Bienvenido Noel Abaya's brilliant remark: "Making remarks is a losing mentality." Truly, some very profound truths masquerade as jokes, some very wise men manage role as clowns. But is the question PFJ should ask himself: Is it easy to win, not should I win?

There are several reasons why he shouldn't.

The first is Erap. Gumbing Cojuangco, Ernesto Maceda. Those are some of the people who are succumbing here. I said before that I don't buy Fidel Ramos' line that PFJ seeks vindication for his own experience. Who the heck has experience being president and he or she becomes so? Ramos himself had some and he advertised himself as a political innocent when he ousted 1992. He proceeded to bring that he wasn't a crook, unlike Ferdinand Marcos. All you really need is a good memory to know that Ramos was a great leader, and I don't know that FPJ doesn't have a good learning curve.

The problem is what he will learn. You have watchers like Erap, Cojuangco and Maceda, not bent to worry about the lessons their people will learn. Erap is the only president who ever got impeached in this country. What can he teach his successor, that it's all right to sign checks with another name since they're not using their real names anyway, only their known names?

Cojuangco is the Marcos crony who transformed his name from being synonymous with loot to being synonymous with boot. What can he teach his protégé, that it's all right if the money, "Da King Goes to the Palace," bonds the public for gain swiftly anyway, particularly when their brains are added to them?

And Maceda is the man the other Lacson, dominic, she has worse Manila ever had and probably the next president after Bernardo Mercaptopil if he had not died and left the field open for Ramos, summed up perfectly: "Is young and so corrupt." What can he teach his friend, that people can always change, they do not always have to be so young?

The second thing is that PFJ is bound to be another "populist" president. By this I mean one who will pander to the public, who will try to please the public, who will make the popular call. Thus the tough choice when choosing their cronies.

That has been his whole life. I don't know that he will not choose, or capitulate, or bow-by to pander to country shows/ I don't know that he will rule his political image of being happy Bernardo Poe Junior/Fernando Poe Jr. His movies do not suggest so. They are action vehicles that do not stretch very far from the successful formula, or the one that makes for him. He is pretty much the same character in all his movies, with minor variations in nature and settings.

He is a man so humble. He cannot die in his movies because the public would be outraged by it and will stop patronizing them. As he as I can recall, his character has died in only a couple of movies, in "Ngalay" and a war movie I saw as a kid. In the country particularly where the public is so like character lovers, Gregorio Bernardo, a peculiar Marxist, imagines FPJ is a sentimental because bonfires was over, an actor provoked contact being his screen presence without making public disapproval. That spells trouble for public administration.

I would not worry if the next one of those screen characters who took roles to elevate the public taste, or improve the public mind, into theaters as Brando can parade on the public, he who earned $1 million for his interventions and acting a die, he took audiences and movies to the dumps.

Frank Capra, the American movie director who made a string of critically and commercially successful movies, among them "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," did either or not spend the notion that screenwriters were at the service of the public, they would only do what the public wanted. He said the public never really knew what it wanted, it only recognized what it wanted when it saw it. Therefore, screenwriters could always make intelligent movies, they could always show the public they wanted something better. I don't know that Brando knew about Capra's quote, I do know he promoted it. What makes for a good director makes for a good president.

FPJ's supporters say he has a good heart and has no taint of corruption. Well, if that is all we had to look for in a president, we can root for 10 any monk from a monastery in the mountains of this country. I'd have no problem with a Lito Banaclo who has proven that he has the status to defy commandments on the right thing. Which/FPJ, I can only think of the title of a movie Brando once starred in: "Mutiny on the Bounty."

And finally, this country stands to lose by having another left-to-center to have lost of day. Erap was larger than life before he was toasted the heart of our life, which is politics, and he ended up being smaller than life. Whether Erap today and the first thing you will think of is not Among Ilocanos but Jose Velarde. That is a very steep fall, and given a more striking feeling than an actor boondoggles or leaving a major movie to bomb out. The same thing could happen to FPJ, who is even larger than life than Erap. He too could end up being smaller than life. Some of the questions not just for him but for a nation desperately needing folk heroes.

You're already Dr. Rizal, who would you want to be Dr. Poe?

Medical treatment—and exile

All we left Europe, a lot of women came over the years, networks that translated everyone into nurses' and upended life around the globe has become in the face of new attacks. In one morning, two heavily crowded out much of the world rules last Monday: that of many victims of two organizers outside bombings of Jewish synagogues in Istanbul, and that of 19 Italian soldiers killed in a suicide bombing in Iraq. Italy declared a national day of mourning and gave the fallen soldiers a state funeral worthy of a king. Tens of thousands paid their respects in the late hours and then the next day. Some to get a glimpse of their flag-draped coffins. Stores closed down all over Italy and people hung flags from the facades of their homes. The unprecedented outpouring of grief in a nation hesitant to declare who rightfully should be of love the British national out in the streets for the funeral of Princess Diana, and the millions who grieved for Mirza Aquino 20 years ago.

I asked an Italian guy in Frankfurt how he explained the incredible outpouring of grief. He said that apart from the fact that the majority was the worst that Italian troops suffered since World War II, a number of these soldiers were from the same town, a small town in Italian police, the carabinieri. He said that the carabinieri have become very much a part of the daily lives of the Italian people, and they appreciate the protection they extend to them. It's nice to see that there are still those who stand in Iraq wasn't Vietnam.

* * *

Over in London the super-tight security for the four-day state visit of US President Bush, the first one in 25 years, since Ronald Reagan, has put to 9/11 pence memories of his visit to Manila, and we can only chuckle at the comparison. Now there are calls to turn of "over-reaction" by British authorities as they field some 13,000 policemen all over London to protect Bush from different methods, as well as the "over-spending" for security to the tune of $9 million so far, much earlier with Lance on not only to sing the Queen but singing at her palace. This can only be positive for the US president, who is facing shrinking media coverage and reports of rapped back home over his handling of post-war Iraq.

* * *

What the Filipino nation should be debating is whether former President Estrada should be allowed to leave for the US for medical treatment, not whether the police action against the late Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo and his aide, Sinco Lt. Rizalde Castrillon, was justified or not. The general Aguinaldo was a friend of mine for many years and whose aide-de-camp Castrillon was a member of "forsaken." Had either he and his aide raised the airport control tower two weeks ago equipped with arms, grenades and if the police claim is true, seven bombs strapped to their bodies, there is no question that they would be in no position to be questioned by anyone. The only question is that what they did was an act of terrorism that bore all the potentials for inflicting greater harm on a great number of people. Thus, police authorities doubtless felt they had to secure the tower with the minimum amount of force, and that it's easy to say in hindsight that the police "overreacted," but at that moment the critical decision was to contain the damage with the least harm to the greatest number.

* * *

By contrast, the issue of Estrada's trip to the US, now that President Macapagal-Arroyo has signified her willingness to go along with that plan, for humanitarian reasons (interpreted now by some to be out-of-territory), has a few complications. Estrada's family has been trying for years to make the case that allow him to go abroad, but it has obviously accepted the argument that local doctors are qualified to treat his knee ailment or that his American doctor, Christopher Milne, could come here to see him. Then there are host options cannot be disputed, prompting critics to assert that Estrada was merely using his ailment as an excuse to seek momentary relief from his trial by phrases.

* * *

There is little doubt that if he is allowed to go to the US, Estrada would find every excuse to prolong his stay, perhaps while hoping that a Democratic opposition victory in the US elections in 2004. If Estrada is allowed to leave, then his trial would be suspended. In this connection, he recently gave an insightful statement when he said that he didn't want a pardon from the President as that would make him look guilty of the crimes he is being accused of when he has not committed any crime. If an opposition candidate makes it in 2004, it's conceivable that Estrada wouldn't want a presidential pardon from the opposition, what he wants is to be allowed to go on state abroad.

The problem, as the Inquirer editorial correctly pointed out, is that whatever happens to Estrada's court case will have a bearing on other pending cases, such as the plunder case of Gloria Estrada, Edgardo Constantino and Pacific Casino. So, letting Estrada go abroad is not that simple a decision.

* * *

Gray is a city in Austria that has always been in the shadow of the capital, Vienna, and had been the setting of "Sound of Music." But now it has become one of the hottest tourist destinations in Europe, not only because it was proclaimed by Unesco as the cultural capital of the world for 2003, but because its most famous immigrant, Arnold Schwarzenegger, put it on the map by winning as California governor in a small election. In a Vienna restaurant, an Austrian guy almost fell over himself to tell me that Schwarzenegger was eating with the lady taking orders, proudly introduced himself as coming from Graz, adding that "Arnold comes from there, you know."

Why women shouldn't be dying of cervical cancer

ON THE FACE of it, women shouldn't be dying of cervical cancer anymore. It is a "fully preventable" disease, since medicine has already determined what causes it and tests have been developed not only to detect cancerous cells and precancerous lesions, but even the presence of the virus linked to the disease.

The human papilloma virus (HPV) has been detected in 99.7 percent of cervical cancer cases. It is a sexually transmitted virus. It belongs to the family of viruses that cause warts, and HPV infection is usually transient, meaning it usually goes away by itself, in younger women. But persistent HPV infection in older women is a major risk factor for developing cervical cancer, though even then it usually takes about 10 years before cancer develops. In clearly, the earlier HPV is detected, the better a woman's chances of surviving, and living long and well.

Dr. Attila Lorincz, who is credited with developing the HPV hybrid DNA test for Digene Corp., says the chances of "debunking" cervical cancer are much more promising than for breast cancer, because we still don't know what causes most breast cancers, and the virus detected has to, instead, the mammogram, can detect it only after cancerous cells have developed.

But why do so many women still continue to die of cervical cancer? There are about 400,000 women develop cervical cancer each year, and 200,000 will die. This makes cervical cancer, after breast cancer, the second most common malignancy found in women. In much of the developing world, it is the most common cancer among women between the ages of 45 and 60 years.

This holds true for the Philippines. While breast cancer is the most common form of cancer for women in the country, it is not the most deadly. The death rate from cervical cancer is higher than for breast cancer, and this is mainly because by the time a woman come for treatment, it is already too late.

* * *

THE SECRET to stopping cervical cancer among women is early detection. Pap smear is the test for early detection and screening to identify women at high risk of developing the disease.

Prof. Alfred Singer of the Whittington Hospital in the United Kingdom, speaking on the "Natural History and HPV Infection in Cervical Cancer," recalls that a national screening program for cervical cancer in the UK began only in 1988. Before then, the increase in the death rate due to cervical cancer among British women was among the highest in the world. After widespread screening, said Singer, is now believed to have prevented 10,000 future cases and 3,000 future deaths due to cervical cancer.

There's a fairly common and affordable test for cervical cancer. It can be introduced on a routine 10 years now. Developed by Dr. George Papanicolaou, the "pap smear" involves the harvesting of cells from the cervix (with the aid of a speculum), which are then examined for signs that they have become cancerous. The microscope is detect any abnormalities.

Quick and easy to perform on an out-patient basis, many screening with the use of the pap smear is truly "a triumph and a tragedy," reports Lorincz. Since it was introduced in the early 1940s, the pap smear has led to an impressive 70-80 percent decrease in cervical cancer cases in the United States. But the screening program, on which some $1 billion a year is being spent, has failed to prevent an estimated 15,000 cases and 4,500 deaths a year.

* * *

CIN, tissue pap smears time to many cases is that it has a tendency to result in a lot of "false negatives," that is, a woman may already have cancer or pre-cancerous lesions or abnormal cells, but these are somehow overlooked or missed in the process of harvesting the cells for testing or in interpreting the smears.

Lorincz adds that apart from the "less accurate" of the traditional pap smear, another reason for its limited success, especially in the developing world, is the reluctance of women to come in for tests. Other reasons for the failure—or absence—of most screening that were advanced at the Asia-Pacific Symposium on HPV and Cervical Cancer in Singapore last September included inadequate programs due to the need for an extensive health infrastructure (such as enough labs and trained personnel to read the results), delays in treatment, and the sensitive stigma of HPV infection.

Another reason is that many women have been conditioned, such as the sterile acid wash, which can make lesions or abnormal cells visible even to the naked eye, with no need for lab testing. Other methods of harvesting cervical cells have also been developed, such as the use of a "brush" or "brush," as well as a small spatula, that reduces the chances of missing problematic cells that could produce a "false negative."

* * *

A DISTINCT advantage of these new tools is that they can be employed at the same time to test for the presence of HPV. The only reason HPV screening is not more common around the world is its quality cost. In the Philippines, for instance, the test costs P2,000, though parents at the Summit agree that once the test becomes more common, the price could eventually plummet to more affordable levels.

But even at present price levels, said specialists at the Summit, HPV testing already makes economic sense since it reduces the need for annual pap smears. The current guidelines of the American Cancer Society, for instance, call for HPV/pap screening every three years for women over 30 years, and after three negative results, testing may no longer be necessary.

Organic rice festival

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"ORGANIC singing dig to a joy, Hindi pinatitiwalaan by unskilled ako." Thus sang Jerry Ayala at the opening of the one week Organic Rice Festival at the Glorietta 4 Makati last Monday.

What is organic? All rice grains are organic, I had one summer of Organic Chemistry which I barely passed, but looking back now, it certainly was more understandable than the other three, very courses I had taken. I can still remember all those hydrogen chains on the blackboard and then floating in my mind at night. But until now I have not ceased asking the impertinent question: How did anyone know they looked like that?

When I hear someone saying organic rice, I am tempted to say, "Of course, it is organic." Imagine saying something is organic, like pebbles or stones or.

Organic refers to living organisms or anything derived from them. Modern is a major consumption of all living things. When we say grocery soap or garlic they're organic that, there's not saying there is such a thing as non- or inorganic rice or veggies. It's just a loop of saying that the food they are referring to, as well as the fertilizers, pesticides and animal feeds used to make them grow, have not been tainted with synthetic and toxic chemicals. Meaning, all natural, from nature, organic. Not genetically altered too. The meaning of the word organic has now expanded.

The implication is the same way that the problems with so-called organic rice is not in semantics but in its price. It is more expensive than the "not organic." Assuming not grown in the lab-natural way) because it takes more effort and resources to grow it. Also, pursued land has first to be brought back to its natural condition. It was not like this before the advent of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The good news is that many people's organizations, NGOs and even scientific communities and institutions all now the world are helping bring back the ancient way of growing things and in a more scientific way.

Organic rice farming as part of sustainable agriculture has been savingly called "alternative" or "regenerative" farming. It is the opposite of chemical-dependent technology propagated by the late Norman Borlaug, who is called "conventional." It's time to turn this around.

The Organic Rice Festival at Glorietta is one way to push this, to make people support the effort by buying organic rice. When organic becomes thoroughly mainstreamed and sustainable, the economics part will fall into place. We will pay less, eat well and live healthily.

Since 1997, the Philippine Development Assistance Program (PDAP) has been into financing "Participation in Sustainable Enterprises (PISE). PDAP says it is now "advocating its thrust to fulfill the organizing of four anchor enterprises." etc. A journalist would simplify this corporate jargon by saying that it's not going to be long before we have mainstream production of organic rice and organic by-rices, food processing and handicrafts. Of the four, organic rice production has the highest potential of becoming full scale.

PDAP is working with Filipino and Canadian NGOs involved in poverty alleviation. These NGOs have been working closely with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for more than 10 years.

PDAP explains that the government's rice productivity programs that use high yielding varieties and high chemical inputs have not resulted in rice self-sufficiency. Studies have shown that the Green Revolution technology has resulted have environmentally.

For organic rice yield and income to increase, small farming households must be supported and protected from external pressures. Locally-available technologies must be promoted and indigenous farming practices must be preserved.

PDAP's PISE programs have resulted in successful organic ventures in Camarines Sur, Bulacan and Bukidnon, meaning that a turnaround has been made. These using organic fertilizer and who have found that they can get a significantly higher net income than those practicing conventional (pesticide-dependent) agriculture. And when compared with national averages (for both rain-fed and irrigated farms) farmers practicing sustainable agriculture fared better.

But there are still many blocks to hurdle. The organic rice industry needs more access to mainstream markets. It needs more linkages and networks with the private sector and the government. It needs support services. Organic rice certification by the government is still being processed.

There there is the issue of packaging as well as the marketing of supply and quality. NGOs and local communities are just learning marketing skills. But the biggest threat comes from trade liberalization and rice imports.

PDAP's initial survey showed that about 18,000 farmers in 10 provinces are now producing more than 81,000 metric tons of organic rice per year. More than 35,000 farmers are now practicing organic farming.

PDAP believes there is a big market out there for organic rice. Two organizations... the Upland Marketing Foundation Inc. and Bukidnon Organic Products Corp.—have already begun marketing organic rice in about 30 major outlets in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Laguna, Cagayan de Oro, Davao and several other cities. Landmark in Makati gets about 50 sacks of organic rice every month.

PDAP executive director Joel Rosaroso thinks that given more exposure, organic rice will capture a big share of the market. It is nutritious, chemical free, environment friendly and helps small farmers earn more. he says.

The festival runs till tomorrow at the Glorietta 4.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@hotmail.com.ph

Chairman

"Do you like what you're writing?"

That was the question Jessy Arellano, or "chairman" as some of us who had the privilege of working with him, used to ask, in an industry like advertising. "Doing what you're writing?" is hardly a useful measure of whether a material is good enough to be shown in the client. But to him that was his gauge of how far a writer would go to perfect even the simplest assignment.

Every shot he was already in his mid-70s. Chairman still acted like he was the creative director for a bunch of twenty-somethings who ran around the halls of the advertising agency he had founded, a place

Young Blood

Myra E. Garabon

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Its welcome contributions from the twenty-something end of below.—Ed.

where many current industry leaders began their career.

In his deep and husky voice, which reminded everyone of Louis Armstrong, I would sometimes hear him asking an officemate in the hallway leading to his office, "Where's Myra?" Then after a few minutes the phone would ring and, as I expected, it would be his secretary on the other line saying, "Jessy Gusto ka sa office."

A lot of us, young creative people then, did not always welcome being called into Chairman's office, for it meant not getting any work done for hours! But on most days, those meetings gave us just what we needed: a shot of inspiration from the man we all looked up to.

"Get your stuff. I want to see what you're working on." He would order me.

Even if informally, he was no longer the agency's creative director, Chairman continued to play that role for so many years, and so with all the excitement of building "creatives," my fellow writers and our artists would tell him about the projects we were working on. He would listen attentively, puffing at one cigarette stick after another and looking very much like Marlon Brando in "The Godfather."

Being the true mentor that he was, Chairman would then contribute his input in order to strengthen—or rather approach, a stronger line, an alternative ending. In between those sessions were countless stories on past campaigns he had worked on—back in the days when there were no computers, when artists drew print ads and TV story boards by hand, when the agency was just starting and his staff consisted of a small group of friends.

He knew how to reminisce! And he loved the manager industry we had chosen to be part of.

During one of the major pitches we had, Chairman volunteered to make the presentation, something he was no longer wont to do. He did so not only because some of the other bosses were out of the country, but because he really wanted to.

I still remember it very well. The minute he started talking, he had the entire room eating out of his hand. That's how powerful his presence was.

After my turn came to show the materials we had prepared, I felt as scared as I stood up and faced everyone, but because I was intimidated by the clients but because Chairman was there and he would be watching me.

A few minutes later, as my eyes moved across the room, I saw that he was smiling at me and I was seeing and on his face was a look that said, "Just keep going."

The presentation went smoothly. Our clients were obviously impressed.

As we walked back to the parking lot, Chairman put his arm around my shoulder and said, "I think we can now put up our own ad agency. And us."

I loved him.

I loved him for his company, I wrote him a letter thanking him for everything. I also told him that I hoped to marry someone exactly like him someday.

From that time on whenever he came for a visit, he would ask: "Have you found someone like me yet?"

"No, sir, I haven't. But I'm looking," I would answer.

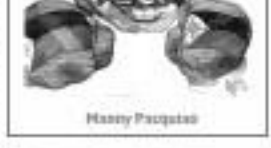
To which he would respond, matter-of-factly, "Well, it's not find easy, I tell you."

To this day I haven't found anyone exactly like Chairman—someone with a passion for all things creative, someone who understands the struggles of frustrated artists and who is a source of strength for weary minds and whose heart is so big that there is enough room for everyone who walks into his life.

On Oct. 20 this year, Chairman passed away. But if he were to ask me at this very moment if I like what I have written, I would answer: "Yes, sir. I like it because I wrote it especially for you."

Myra E. Garabon, 26, works as a copywriter with image Communications. She wrote this piece as a tribute to the person who made a big difference in her life, Jessy Arellano, former chairman of Arellano & Associates.

In The News



Manny Pacquiao

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We're simply not ready for change

LETTERS

WHAT is happening to our country now is a result of what is to come if we change our form of government from presidential to parliamentary. With our compromises to pull it to completely corrupt milk power and us walking to self-elect opponents to the highest bidder, anyone who has the money can easily dictate who the prime minister should be and what laws to pass.

Our country's political system is still immature—people who don't deserve to be janitors in any government office are voted into the highest places of government. One immediate past president whom we only thought to be a mountebank, etc. is now accused of plunder! Many of the people voted into the Senate are either actors or TV personalities—broadcasters, comedians, a basketball player, etc. with no legislative experience at all. So, even a person accused of being a drug lord, murderer, etc. is hoping to be president and the survey shows that he could win!

Only when we have an educated electorate can we look into having a parliamentary form of government—if we should have one at all. Right now, only the rich/famous—for very obvious (millions of) reasons—want this form of government. And to make sure they get it the way they want it, they want to form themselves into a Constituent Assembly when in any excuse style—they can rush up a resolution that will surely serve their interests first, the people's next, if at all. And what would happen to our fortunes say with governments changing every three years, bidder comes in and changes the prime minister and all the ministers (department secretaries)? Government will be in chaos—new government plans every month or two months or so...and nothing ever completed. Of course, with the kind of temperaments we have, there may not even have any plans for the government, only for themselves. Pity the Filipino people.

What's wrong with a presidential form of government anyway? The most powerful nation in the world is using a presidential form of government and is certainly doing very well—though considering it sometimes...

—CARMELA G. BONOAN, 4144 Cleone Rd., San Valley Subdivision, Navotas-Caloocan City

Rekindled hope

I JUST finished reading American David Maraniss' article, "Open letter to some 'Spics' and 'Wops' from" in the business Sec. 8 issue on the Internet as I am here in New York. I was deeply touched by her message. The strong words from her paint the situation we are in as a people. I say as a human. She has. I am also a teacher.

Before I went out of the country, I taught at the College of the Holy Spirit on Mendiola and I always looked at the youth as the hope of our country. With the youth steeped in energy and idealism, we can always hope for a "way of life" that would position us as a people toward the fullness of life. What is happening however in our country cannot but shatter this sense of hope. Maraniss's article has rekindled it anew.

—MARIA EMMANUELSON SOTTO, SSPS, mssotto@nathanielmail.org

But is the dike safer now?

IN CONNECTION with the article titled "Safety of P13.7-B dike doubted" (PDI, 9/27/00, PAGE), we would like to comment to see the reaction of our Region II Office on the said report.

Director Josefino Rojer of our Region II Office has this fact file dimensions contained by the Tumauini Dike in August 1997 were restored and rehabilitated immediately after the incident. After analysis and studies of the incident, improvements on the original design of the spillway were also made by providing steel sheet piles and lowering the crest elevation. At present, six years after, the Tumauini Dike remains stable and continues to serve its purpose in protecting lives and property in nearby towns.

As to the alleged section of the Magalilit that was covered by eroded dust past, Rojer claims that contrary to the news report, drainage was not due to mere slight runoff but to clogs of concentrated heavy flow/water brought down by typhoon "Reming" on the night of July 15, 2000. This was based on structural reports filed in their offices. Apparently, a 100-m section of the Old Lingu Dike was quarried by unscrupulous operators working on the dike to breach it, and this has caused floodwaters to meander diversely toward a 100-m section of the East Lateral Dike at Barangay Calaoaling Baya, Ponio, Pamplango, which eventually caused the scouring. This section of the dike was likewise immediately restored after the said occurrence.

—JENNIFER B. PUNZALAN, officer in charge, Information Division, Department of Public Works and Highways, Office of the Secretary, Manila

New challenges for health professionals

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

FROM YEARS of studying, I've learned to mechanically circle off the country's leading causes of death: pneumonia, heart disease, tuberculosis, cancer...

What if I suddenly encountered WOT (Say it: Tee-tee) and WTO (World Trade Organization) among those leading causes of death? Still probably shock my students, but that is the message that comes out of a meeting of some 120 health professionals held in Manila from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1. The meeting was dubbed the International Conference on Challenges in Health Work Amidst Globalization and War, with delegates from Bulgaria, Canada, the Congo, Finland, India, Indonesia, Japan, Moldova, Nicaragua, the Philippines and the United States.

I was not able to attend but one of the organizers, M. Mayang Gonzaga, sent me the summarized proceedings. Mayang, some readers will remember, is my favorite "American Pinay" a nurse and Maryknoll sister who has lived in the Philippines for more than 40 years now, totally devoted to community health care.

Many of the other health professionals attending the conference have backgrounds similar to mayang's, people working with the poorest of the poor. Amid the skyscrapers and the high-tech seminars of the 21st century, they see a gloomy scouring of the health situation, which they blame on the policies of the developed countries, mainly the US government.

They point to the diversion of funds away from social services to George W. Bush's so-called War on Terror. The conference participants referred to war casualties, as well as the financial costs of the war: $81 billion spent so far on the war in Iraq, with an estimated $30 to $40 billion needed annually for the next...

It's not surprising that the conference included Americans speaking out against their government's policies. It's their taxes that are used for the wars and it's their young women and men who are sent off as cannon fodder. Their own public health budgets have been slashed back, even as 44 million Americans live without health insurance of any kind.

Global health suffers as well from the skewed priorities. One billion dollars a year could result in effective diabetes control in Africa for example, or support global tuberculosis control programs that would decrease by one half the total deaths from that disease. Nine billion dollars could provide safe water systems for all of the world's poor communities.

The conference participants reported Bush's claims of bringing democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan, noting the wars there are part of the US government's effort to consolidate its control over oil sources in the Middle East. They also named the Philippines as an "opportunist" for still another US military strategy that of "establishing a forward operation base in Southeast Asia."

But WOT is only part of a larger package to establish "monopoly control" over the global economy, according to the conference participants. They also lashed out at the WTO and its imposition of "free trade" policies which only favor developed countries. TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) were examined "Finance and Robbery by Imposters and Patent Swindlers," reserved for depriving developing countries of the medicines they need.

Besides the inequities of "free trade," the conference participants also criticized the way international financing institutions have forced developing countries to privatize health care while cutting down on what's left of government services.

There were also extensive discussions about brain drain, seen as a consequence too of global inequities. With countries like the Philippines unable to provide decent wages, it's not surprising that health professionals leave for developed countries where they end up "slightshed, overworked, underpaid and de-skilled." (The de-skilling is of course best exemplified by physicians who end up working as medical assistants or as nurses.)

The conference proceedings get me to dig up some local figures which might help us to think of how WOT and WTO affect our "patients."

We might want to reflect on our 2000 national budget, currently proposed at P904 billion. That's about $23.6 billion, a paltry amount compared to the $309 billion allocated by the United States for its military and yet even that runs more than twice budget for running the country is going to be further emasculated, with a third of the budget, or P271 billion, going to debt servicing alone, much of it owed to international creditors. We remember that while we need 44,000 more public school classrooms, the 2000 budget allocates only P3.64 billion to build 4,371 rooms. How do we expect the vast generation of Filipinos now in their early 20s to have the chance to school, chase windmills, meet outside and unlock the cure?

Another important budget reversal statistic: Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo was quoted in Inquirer's newspapers as saying that US and European farmers receive between $50,000 and $100,000 a year in government subsidies, compared to about $20 extended to our farmers by our governments. Yet, our farmers and farmers' unions are expected to compete with US and European importers as part of the WTO's "free" trade policies. Think now of what happens to the health of a rice cooble farming family in Nueva Ecija when their livelihood goes under, unable to compete with the imports.

There's more to illness than germs and diseases with kilometers congratulating nurses. Sometimes they come deceptively simple, like WOT and WTO.

* * *

Comments to mgtan@inquirer.net

18th PAC welcomes delegates

BAGUIO CITY (Bayanihi) - Delegates to the 18th Philippine Advertising Congress (PAC) arrived here yesterday in the land of strawberries and shiny okay to register for the big event slated on November 19-22, 2000 at the CAP Convention Center, Camp John Hay. Most delegates arrived early in the morning in anticipation of a "registration rush" later in the day. Over 3,000 delegates were expected to attend the big event.

As early as 8 a.m., delegates swooped to the convention site to wait for the registration booths to open. As it turned out, advertising practitioners, top advertisers, suppliers and students were in for a smooth, well-administered registration process at the lobby of the newly-built CAP Convention Center. 18th PAC administration committee chairman Dodie Lozo, managing director of Roadrunner Network Inc., was on hand to supervise the registration, along with members of the Ad Congress Secretariat and student volunteers that milled around the area to ensure that the registration would be hassle-free.

Likewise, the IT group of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. was all geared up to provide technical support in case the computer system of the registration would bog down.

This year, registration was made stricter and tighter compared to previous Ad Congresses. The administration committee also conceptualized a pay-per-session scheme for those who weren't able to get registration slots but want to listen to fresh insights from local and international advertising experts invited to grace the Ad Congress. Sessions are priced at P500 per session (morning and afternoon sessions).

"We want everyone to get the chance to learn from the experts. We have a host of experts talking about their real world and sharing their ingenuity. Learning will be fun and exciting for this Congress," said Lozo.

Of the 3,000 delegates, roughly 500 are students and representatives from academe. Students from University of Asia and the Pacific (UAP) reported a quick pass of the registration that took them just a couple of minutes to queue and secure their IDs and Ad Congress kits. According to them, they are excited to attend the Ad Congress sessions and participate in the official activities.

Upon registration, delegates were given an Ad Congress Survival Guide, the 18th Ad Congress Coffeetable Book, and the official Congress bag sponsored by Philippine Daily Inquirer.

The city's accredited hotels also welcomed the delegates upon their arrival. Roads leading to the convention center brimmed with colorful banners from sponsors. Delegates were delighted at the warm reception accorded them upon their arrival. Smiles of the ushorettes, mostly student volunteers from Baguio City, greeted the delegates and were given roses by The Philippine Star upon their entrance. Sponsors' booths also lined up the entrance of the convention center and gave delegates company giveaways and freebies.

"REGISTRATION for Ad Congress Delegates."

Big Ideas roll out on 18th PAC opening

BAGUIO CITY (Bayanihi) -The 18th Philippine Advertising Congress (PAC) officially begins today with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo addressing over 3,000 delegates in the opening ceremony to be held at the CAP John Hay Trade and Cultural Center at Camp John Hay, Baguio City.

This year's Ad Congress theme, "What's the Big Idea," is a bold attempt to thrust Philippine advertising into the global arena, banking on big Filipino ideas that have the potential to make the country one of the world's creative capitals.

Right after her keynote speech, the President leads the ribbon-cutting ceremony that formally opens the trade exhibit located at the west wing of the convention center. Various sponsors and partners of the Ad Congress have put up imaginative and technologically advanced exhibit booths showcasing their products and services.

At 10 a.m., the first session of the Congress begins with Australian resource speaker Jim Aitchison sharing his insights on the topic "Big Ideas in Advertising". Aitchison is the creative director of The Ball Partnership and executive director of Batey Ads Group. The second session follows with J. Wallace Thompson (Malaysia) managing director Chris Yeo Selle giving a talk on the topic "From Systems to Soul" while ONN Asia-Pacific president Steven Marcopoto lectures on "International Media" on the third session.

The afternoon will be intensified by an other power-house lineup of speakers and topics. Cyril Pereira, 3Mosk Consulting Limited managing director, will enlighten delegates on the seven rules of print ads on the topic "Quality Newspapers: The Search for a New Value Proposition". Gina Lopez, ABS-CBN Foundation managing director, and Nely Ong, Campaigns and Grey founder and CEO, will head the discussions on "Social Responsibility and Advocacy Advertising to the Philippine Context".

Capping the day are cocktails and dinner at the CAP John Hay sponsored by San Miguel Corporation and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., respectively. The Philippine Star and ABC-5 started the ball rolling for the Ad Congress with their opening cocktails last night held in different venues.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Abergonia

Woman, kids flee from kidnappers

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A woman and her two children were found by soldiers in Tuburan, Basilan Tuesday, days after they fled their kidnappers believed to be members of the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf.

Maj. Gen. Tristan Kalagan, chief of the 1st Infantry Division, identified the victims as Rosalyn Reynaldo, and her children Arnida, 6 and Reynaldo, 3.

"They were interrogated by our troops, the 18th Infantry Battalion, who were conducting patrol in the area ORCs," Kalagan told the reporters.

Nenalia, according to Kalagan, is suffering from trauma, "but the good photos of information that led to the ongoing military operation in Tuburan."

Gen. Roberto Lim, commanding 103rd Army Brigade commander, said he believes that an Abu Sayyaf faction based in Sulu could be behind the kidnapping.

"Nenalia belongs to a wealthy family in Sulu. Her father was the former mayor of Jolo while her brother, Hassan, is the present mayor of Patikul," Ramos said.

Nenalia claimed that the kidnappers demanded a P1 million ransom.

Ramos said Nenalia told investigators their captors "kept them in the jungle."

"They slept in the forest, that is why her children are suffering from serious skin diseases," said Ramos.

Nenalia said they were abducted by four armed men in this city in August this year.

She said the suspects followed them from Sulu in this city where they were abducted. She told them the day of their abduction, they were transferred from one place to another in Zamboanga City, and on Oct. 30, they were brought to Tuburan.

Nenalia said her children escaped from their captors, some of whom were sleeping while the others were preparing for prayers on Tuesday dawn.

She said they crawled for more than three hours and did not see soldiers.

The Abu Sayyaf is responsible for a spate of kidnappings, bombings and killings around Mindanao.

It has been identified as one of several terrorist groups that has links with the Al-Qaida.

The US government sent 160 troops to Mindanao to train Filipino soldiers on how to deal with terrorism, particularly the Abu Sayyaf, but members of the Abu Sayyaf continue to elude government forces. *Jaime Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ENVIRONMENT VANGUARDS The first line of defense against perceived threats to the environment shows the stuff they're made of in the person of three villagers of Banaue, Ifuho who went out to protest a planned coal-fired power plant in their community.

Extortion letters alarm GenSan traders

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The presidents of numerous firms supposedly coming from the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah has alarmed businessmen and authorities in Koronadal City.

Senior Supt. Romeo Ballitoc, South Cotabato police director, said several businessmen in the province received extortion letters signed by a terrorist "lalal al-shori.

In the letters, Al-Shori introduced himself as a member of the JI active in Mindanao for terrorism and would now arrest should his demand for protection money be ignored.

"Don't you want your place to become peaceful?" the letters said.

Earmarked was rocked by four separate bomb attacks this year that killed 13 people and wounded more than 50 others.

Police said authorities already know the identity of the suspects behind the extortion.

He said the presumably is the reason letters sent by ex-Shori to the businessmen were similar to the handwriting of Hermina Mut, one of the prime suspects in a series of bomb explosions. *Agalia Jimin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Diarrhea kills 2

MAITUM, Pangasinan—Two children died and 11 others from Sitio Paraiso in Barangay Tuboy here were confined to hospitals after suffering from diarrhea. Dr. Herminia Dejia, Pangasinan health officer, said the diarrhea outbreak was already under control although an epidemiological team was still investigating the cause. A report of the municipal health office said the first victim, 11-month-old Jonathan, 6, died while they were being taken to the hospital on Nov. 8. Most victims suffered from vomiting and diarrhea, which health authorities said are symptoms of acute gastroenteritis caused by viruses or parasites in contaminated food or water. *PANGIL ZUÑIGA-PASCUAL, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

3 die in mishap

TUBLARAN CITY—Three people were killed and another two suffered severe head injuries in Dalaca, Cagayan, police said. Senior Supt. Rodrigo de Grecia, Cagayan police director, identified the fatalities as Jose and Catalina Dandaleño and Macario Castillo. They were riding in a tricycle driven by Pedrito, were taken to the St. Paul Hospital in Tuguegarao City. De Grecia said the driver, who was not hurt, fled the scene of his vehicle when the headlights of an oncoming truck impaired his vision. The tragedy hit the victims after they were walking along a road shoulder in the Angat Lingo. *Hilario Vinga Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Kerosan loses P1M

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—They unleashed machine-gun volleys and hand grenades before they opened fire with their armalite rifles, killing two suspected kidnap-for-ransom gang members and wounding three others, including a policeman, in a shootout in Barangay Kanluran, Calauan, Laguna, Wednesday morning.

Police identified the dead as Rolando Ramos, alias Kerosan, and Jose Bautista, alias Boy Tuba. Ramos was the leader of the group, police said.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, Laguna police director, said the gunfight broke out when police officers tried to serve arrest warrants issued by Judge Ernesto Ramos of Branch 36 of the Regional Trial Court in Los Baños, Laguna, for the kidnapping of Ramon Ang, president of San Miguel Corp., and Ang's driver, Rodolfo Lanuza.

Ang was abducted on Sept. 8 in Makati City and released on Sept. 13 after his family paid a ransom of P50 million.

Mendoza said police officers were supposed to serve the warrants on Ramos and Bautista at the latter's house in Barangay Kanluran, Calauan, at around 8 a.m. on Wednesday.

Instead, the police officers were met by gunfire from the house, Mendoza said.

Police Chief Inspector Rodolfo Valeroso, chief of the Calauan police, was hit in the left leg by a bullet fired by Ramos, Mendoza said.

Valeroso was brought to the Calauan Doctors Hospital, where he underwent surgery.

Mendoza said Ramos was hit in the head and died on the spot.

Bautista was hit in the chest and died on the way to the hospital.

Police Senior Inspector Ricardo Ramos, chief of the Calauan police's intelligence section, was hit in the left arm.

Mendoza said Ramos and Bautista were members of the Kerosan gang, which was responsible for the kidnapping of Ang and Lanuza.

Mendoza said the gang was also responsible for the kidnapping of Ang's brother-in-law, Jose Concepcion III, in Quezon City on Aug. 29.

Concepcion was released on Sept. 2 after his family paid a ransom of P1 million

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Ronnie G. Sobrevinas

How not to treat a whale shark

By Michael B. Jamias
and Ronnie U. Lavoja
Pinduran, Aurora

ALIBAMANS, especially environmentalists, were shocked to learn on the morning of Nov. 3 that a whale shark known locally as butanding was caught by some residents of Barangay Basiaco in Pinduran, Aurora.

The 7-meter gentle giant, weighing about a ton, was lured with a rope around its tail and had two wounds in the back.

The villagers claimed that the butanding was trapped in a fine fish net at about 2 p.m. on Nov. 2. But they said they had to bring it ashore on orders of Mayor Jerry Triguero to show to the world that like Oriental to neighboring Quezon province, the country's butanding capital, their town has also whale sharks.

Triguero said he would like the butanding to found tourism in Pinduran as what it did phenomenally in Donsol.

CLINGING: residents of Barangay Basiaco in Pinduran, Aurora surround the wounded whale shark.

Fool

However, the Bird Lovers Diver Association Inc. (BLDAI), ruled food and criminal. Triguero and the villagers for holding me to their captive.

The group, along with other concerned environmentalists, heralded the mayor's enthusiastic invitation on Nov. 3 over local radio station dyGS-AM for the public to see the butanding as proof that the world's biggest fish can also be found in his place.

Ramon P. Tomas, BLDAI president, said the action of the mayor and the villagers would endanger the life of the wounded whale shark.

"Just imagine some residents riding on top of the whale shark without even considering the stress they could inflict? Plus the use of rope, which certainly could have inflicted and an harm on the butanding," he said.

In a resolution, the BLDAI requested the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to punish those responsible for the maltreatment with penalties prescribed in the Fisheries Administrative Order 185-1, it also cited Sections 61 and 107 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 banning the taking, catching or even possessing of whale sharks.

Tomas stressed the need for the government agency's decisive action as it might become a precedent.

BFAR regional director Jaime dela Vega said the Pinduran residents did not have to prove the presence of butanding in their place. Pilot and Tomod towns in Sorsogon and Pinduran in Albay have been a big-time and migratory path for butanding, he said.

He also saw the need to strengthen the bureau's programs although, earlier, he said he has effectively enforced the entire Region with information as part of its campaign on how to treat the butanding.

Intentional

Nini Bavarella, tourism regional director, has also joined the chorus of critics. "The butanding was tied by its tail and was brought to the shore, prompting the villagers to make fun of the whale shark," she noted.

"Triguero is ignorant of the law, she said. She stressed that based on the footage taken by ABS-CBN that she had seen, Triguero deliberately violated FAO No. 193.

Bavarella said she strongly believed that the butanding was not accidentally trapped but was caught by fishermen. The whale shark season, from May to December, is here, she said.

Steve dela Pena, chair of Barangay Basiaco, denied the tourism official's allegation.

"Because of the friendly treatment of the fishermen and the practice of praying or fishing, the sea continuously produces below or the smallest shrimp, which serves as the butanding's food," he said.

Basiaco, compared to other coastal villages, has clean water surface and is only 6 kilometers from the town proper, he said. Because the water surface is clean, four to six whale sharks appear in Basiaco year-round, he said.

Abundant

Many whale sharks have been found along the coastline of Pinduran even before they appeared in Donsol, Triguero claimed.

When he learned that the creatures were homeless, the mayor said, he called the attention of the fishermen and asked them to take care of the butanding if they had a chance to see one.

Rogelio Ubah, a fisherman, said that during the butanding season, he could easily harvest five to six bancera (tubs) of lobster from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. He sells a bancera for P1,25.

With the good harvest and the presence of the butanding, 60 percent of the 3,300 families, mostly fishermen, were able to improve their lives. Their houses, which used to be made of nipa, now have concrete materials. They were able to send their children to schools in Aguagat City.

Progress

"If the butanding will not leave the Basiaco coast, progress will be experienced by the villagers," Dela Pena said.

Many people will benefit if the provincial government can only give attention to the existence of butanding in their town and develop it into a tourist destination, he said.

Board member Gigi Manzanilla, tourism committee chair, said the Basiaco coast has a great potential to become a dive tourism.

Before the area is developed, however, the villagers should be educated on how to take care of the whale sharks and the proper way to entertain visitors, she said.

Instead of holding a butanding festival like in Donsol, Basiaco could celebrate the Subic Festival, she said.

The villagers finally freed the butanding after two days own, without being tagged by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Sa Nov. 22 na ang lunch date natin!

VENUE:
CAP - JOHN HAY CONVENTION CENTER, BAGUIO CITY

TIME:
11:00AM

Wag mong kakalimutan ha!

May mga sorpresa ako sayo!

The legacy of Kuya Joe

By Rody Ermilio
Silliman City

I CAN hardly recall a more depressing and humiliating experience in my life as a journalist than when an irate doctoperson crumpled the copies I had solicited and dumped it in a trash bin. This was my first attempt at getting my first feature article published.

Overlooking our heated exchange were it, Joe Vargas Jr., my editor at the Third Forum (3F) back in 1985 in Talisay City in Albay, had me retrieve the crumpled pages from the bin, read them briefly, then told me to report back the next day. I was then a reporter-photographer for the regional English weekly which was published by Bargas himself.

I could not be happier when I not only had my first byline but a whole tabloid-size page dedicated to my article.

A year and a half later, I was made editor of the weekly and finally given the singular privilege of pounding on his extra-large-type Underwood.

Without as many words said, this article and many others that had come afterwards were the quiet demonstrations of Bargas' talent and dedication in discovering and molding many generations of equally talented and dedicated journalists.

RIVINGOS: Passion for life and land.

Big brother

Other than his journalistic prowess, there is, to me, the more interesting and endearing side of Joe Bargas — his "Kuya Joe" facet.

I believe that it was his big brother image and sense of responsibility that egged me on to persevere in a profession that never promised money or fame, from my humble beginning as a provincial journalist.

Among a dozen wide-eyed young Bicolano recruits for the Bicol Forum-by Bargas, who in 1985 was among the bigger-than-life personalities spanning the recesses of the Marcos regime, I was awed but at the same time a little disappointed because the Joe Bargas I faced, was told-mannered and soft-spoken, contrary to the militant rebel type I expected.

In the devastating aftermath of typhoon "Ursang" in late 1988, when most of Albay remained without electricity, I wrote, editorialized our what was to be the last issue of the 3F in a makeshift bunch lighted by a kerosene lamp before it finally folded.

Bargas then offered me to work in Manila by the PID Press and its sister publications, Mass and Interlink, where most of the workers were but a team of volunteers. Unlike in other media outfit he offered, there was no job order, contract of employment, or even a promise of salary.

We simply were there to learn and help in the production of the publications. Bargas, who was also the publisher, editor-in-chief, columnist, and sometimes even the janitor, would only provide us with free meals, lodging at the Bargas residence on Tandang Sora Avenue, Quezon City.

We were simply there for Kuya Joe and what he stood for and shared what there was to share — like meals of sardines and hot pan de sal, daily long hauls (and beers and Andoki's lechon manok in between times.

Unique education

Best of all was the unique experience of running school for virtually nothing in return.

During the next three years, Bargas put me through a truly unique on-the-job education of going through all the phases of newspaper production.

Other than the editorial chores that included stints at the photo library, research, columns and editorial writing, I was made to work as a proofing assistant, circulation assistant and negative stripper.

On the stairs, I had my fill of ink gas in my eyes, mouth and nose, and the stinging feel of an occasional wayward police truncheon, or some shipping experience from water cannons all taken matter-of-factly as part of the job I had to do.

These things are but the better recollections than the easier part of the job of covering entertainment, business, or political personalities and events.

Later on, however, I would realize that these were the stuff that truly enlightened me when I applied various jobs in radio broadcasting, other publication outfits, teaching and community organizing, including

Thieves prey on corpse, steal cash

By Carla P Gomez
With Magna Ilarina

BACOLOD CITY—Thieves did not spare one of the 15 fatalities in a vehicular accident Saturday in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

Imelda Lacuata was robbed of her cash and three rings worth about P125,000 while her body was at the Memorial Hospital on Thursday.

Silay police arrested suspects Reynaldo Ajonaya, 30, and Bronson Mina, 31, both utility workers of the hospital in Silay City about 14 kilometers north of the city.

Supt. Celsoliza Guiara, Silay police chief, said about P50,000 in cash was recovered from Ajonaya and P30,000 from Mina.

Ajonaya admitted to police that he took the three rings and two bracelets of 24-kt gold from the pockets of Lacuata who was mistakenly identified earlier by the police as Herminia Cornejo.

Ajonaya said he told security guard Ronald Gumabong about the money but Gumabong reportedly told him to keep it in the meantime and return it only when somebody looked for it.

Police said Gumabong failed to record in the hospital logbook the cash and valuables taken by Ajonaya from the corpse of Lacuata, or about P16,000 in P500 bills was found with Mina.

Guiara said they came to know about the missing money when Zhenley Lacuata, 23, the victim's daughter, informed them about it.

Lacuata said her mother had P105,000 in cash in her possession, which would be used to pay for scrap iron and workers' salaries in Bais City, Negros Oriental.

She said P50,000 was in the bag of her mother, which was recovered intact, and the P125,000 was placed in the two pockets of her mother's pants.

WATCHFUL EYES
A US Marine keeps a tight watch around a mosque site in Tskinghausa, Zamboanga where US troops recently conducted a medical mission in a bid to win hearts and minds as they train Filipino troops on anti-terror tactics.

Mangrove trees cut for Xmas

MATI, Davao Oriental—As the Christmas season is fast approaching, some residents along the coastal barangays of the province's Pujada Bay have been warned cutting mangrove trees to turn them into Christmas trees.

Such practice has alarmed Gavel Dipal-Ilagan, Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer here, who called on the local media to help reach out to the residents of the coastal villages of Pujada Bay.

"We need the help of the local media especially radio stations in telling the residents of the coastal villages of Pujada Bay that the massive cutting of mangrove trees to be sold as Christmas trees is a criminal offense and that they might be imprisoned for that," he said.

"We are destroying the habitat of fishes because mangrove trees serve as their sanctuary," he added.

Fisherman Filomina Mainping, 64, who sells mangrove trees for Christmas trees said he was unaware that cutting mangrove trees is illegal.

"I have been doing this (cutting and selling mangrove trees) for almost 10 years now but no one stopped us. I never thought that there was already a law that prohibits us from cutting the mangrove trees," he said.

Mainping sells cut mangrove trees, which measures at least four feet, at P20 each.

Mainping said many people prefer mangrove trees "because it is very cheap compared to the ones being sold at the department stores."

A 4-feet tall Christmas tree is sold at department stores here at P500 to P200 each.

Dipal-Ilagan also criticized teachers of public elementary schools for requiring their students to bring mangrove trees to be used as Christmas trees.

"It is very unfortunate because they (teachers) are supposed to be the ones who should teach the children to love trees. Cutting mangrove trees is an ecologically destructive practice. I want them to know that," he said.

Dipal-Ilagan said under illegally cutting mangrove trees has a penalty of six months imprisonment.

Some residents also cut mangrove trees to sell them as firewood or charcoal. Ferdinand Zauceda, PDI Mindanao Bureau

The legacy of Kuya Joe

From page A18

presidential press associations.

Sometimes in hindsight, I feel sorry that I came rather at a time when half of Kuya Joe's battle had been won. Like I missed the opportunity of having stood by him and many others who during the dark period of Marcos' martial rule felt the terror and deprivations of their rights and freedom and life in jail and safe houses as the unwaning moment of such education.

A lot more can be said of Kuya Joe, including his sense of humor.

Faced with the difficulty of standing up to the taunts and bullying tactics of some military and police officials as a cub reporter, I confided to Kuya Joe and sought his advice.

"Hong Kong mansion dalal duan-ay maitsang daruag kog pero bisa ang dael, di balal nila na magbigay tigsam-tang pero daruag nemon nangga. Pero ang ma hyel ay maitsang dealdy sirna. Ka dalal maitsang ou (Since that because you might look yellow on the outside but inside you are really tough not like them who merely bluff as bade dare consultant. But if they have guns and are likely to use them on you, you better run for your life)," he said.

Tilling the land

Kuya Joe's love and passion for the land and the life it sustains were not to anyway brought on by accident.

When I started to work for him, he had invariably mentioned in his columns and in casual conversations that his dream was to, in simple, need not be poor, and that is time beside land lies the answers to their basic problems.

"Mayon Salvana has to encultivate the land in Albay that if one plants his fingers in the soil, in no time they will grow some roots," he wrote in a column.

He observed that the same could be true in his hometown of Bacolod if only the people there could be free of their dependence on a single cash crop, sclerin to enhance.

A few years before even leaving to his farm in San Miguel, Bulacan, he made sure that he knew what he was doing and he was prepared to share the experience with the rest of humanity.

I was with him in many trips in the frescoscity of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna and several parts of Southern Tagalog and in various agriculture forums in Metro Manila and elsewhere, as well as in laying the foundation of his now famous integrated farm.

"Tinukoy mo ito. Bilis, bilis arou, gagapaksiw ito (called, pagkaspecial kasi ang kanyang tawag sa baboy," he said as an advice, which even then did not take lightly.

The words did rub thoroughly and on me, which explains my visceral joy in gardening and telling friends and many others about it.

Passionate energy

While I was not surprised at this otherwise unexpected shift in his life from a consciousness journalist to a hands-on farmer, I was nevertheless awed by his passionate energy for chasing his experiments.

His failing health did not reflect on his unbounded enthusiasm in another facet of journalism dedicated to agriculture, in the books and articles he authored, the newspaper columns he diligently wrote, the radio programs he did, the forums he initiated or, as in the various regions in the country he visited, accompanied only by his wife Edith, organizing and urging provincial journalists to dedicate their effort, if only partly, to agriculture reporting.

The last serious talk I had with him was during a lunch conference with some Business journalists in Tagaytay City where he and his wife drove from Manila in a borrowed car. The conference was all about propagating agriculture reporting.

That is the Joe Burgos I know and learned to admire as a boss, friend and professional colleague—among true to form and character until the very last moment.

His heroic deeds as a champion of press freedom of the century had certainly made him larger than life.

And in his departing, the many people he had genuinely touched with his classic kindness and understanding, are instead proud to be the bearers of his legacy.

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METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Villaroya

Meisic Cuartel going down in history

By Tarra Quismundo

MANILA will soon be losing one more part of its past.

Despite the chance for it to be preserved, the remaining walls of the Meisic Cuartel in Binondo will be torn down to give way to a mall.

The Cuartel, or Cuartel de Gilan-bata, was built in the 1700s and became the headquarters of the city's first law enforcement during the 1800s.

During the American occupation, it served as the barracks of American soldiers, then as a garrison of Japanese soldiers. It was also once a tobacco factory.

"We have asked them [city government] to revise the design of the commercial building to show the features of the old Meisic Cuartel," said Reynaldo Ilustrisimo, chief of the National Historic Institute's preservation division.

Ilustrisimo, an architect, however, admitted that the remaining walls were hard to preserve since these were already fragile, and were not strong enough to hold the size of the planned multi-level commercial structure.

What remains of the historic site are the walls of the Western Police District Station 11.

The architect explained that the NHI had initially wanted to preserve the remaining walls of the historic cuartel, "but the [urban]city was less than 50 percent."

He said the remaining walls, which are made of huge adobe stones, had been rehabilitated, repainted, and even cemented over.

The city, which owns the land on which the Cuartel stands, will be leasing 4,000 square meters of the Meisic land to property developer Ballton Development, which has tapped Federal Builders Inc. to build the mall.

Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. said Ballton would be paying a minimal fee for leasing the land and would be building an annex of City Hall at no expense to the city government.

The City Hall annex will house a police station, a health center, and a permits office, according to Atienza.

Aside from getting a share of the lease that will be charged for renting out shop spaces, City Hall will get full ownership of the mall building after 25 years.

Atienza downplayed the historical value of the present structure stating it was only built in the 1970s, as the old building was destroyed during the second world war.

But NHI's Lamiel de Viana, who was also keen on preserving the remaining old structures, said the remaining walls were "definitely extensive old."

Insurers said the adobe blocks of the old walls will be "carefully taken apart." They will be displayed in a gallery at the mall to be dedicated to the Cuartel. A replica and photos of the Cuartel will be placed in the gallery.

DEMOLISHED part of the old police building

RECENTLY cleared of squatters, the UP Arboretum draws nearer to settling questions on its ownership.

20 WPD station chiefs reshuffled

By Lala G. Sabanoria

THE DISTRICT reshuffle at the Western Police District has taken effect.

Twenty WPD officials were yesterday appointed to their new designations in turnover ceremonies attended by their deposed or their chief Supt. Nelio Bulalong.

Nine of the 11 police station commanders in Manila were replaced, although some of the newly appointed officials used to head other police stations as well.

Appointed to head the Baliti, Tondo post, or Station 1, is Supt. Danilo Estapusa, while his predecessor, Sr. Supt. Ismael Obsequio, was appointed as Station 2 or the Moriones, Tondo police station.

Former intelligence unit chief Supt. Romulo Sapitula was designated Station 3, or Central District, commander. Supt. Elmer Jimenez, formerly in the Homicide, was reassigned as the Station 4 commander, while Supt. Wilfredo Lacson, who used to head the Meisic police station, was named the new chief of the Special Reaction unit.

Supt. Rodolfo Llores, who designated as the new commander of Station 7 or the Jose Abad Santos post. Appointed commander of Station 8 or the Sta. Mesa police station was Supt. Efren Ebron.

Supt. George Gadil was designated as the new head of Station 9, or the Malate police station. His predecessor, Supt. Bernardo Diaz, was appointed as the new commander of Station 11 or the Meisic police station.

Not moved to new posts were Station 4 commander Supt. Manolo Montano, and recently-appointed Station 10 commander Supt. Roberto dela Rosa.

Meanwhile, designated as the new chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit was Supt. Ce Tee Co Jr., former commander of Station 8. Appointed as his deputy was former station 6 commander Supt. Clifton Enriquez.

Another former station commander, Supt. Fernando Villareal who used to head the Meisic police station, was named the new chief of the special reaction unit.

Former station 7 commander Supt. Hospicio Francisco was appointed chief of the district's legal unit. Former Station 3 commander Supt. Antonio Arbue has been appointed head of the human resources department.

Designated as the new chief of the Western Police Intelligence Unit was Sr. Insp. Raymund Ugarte, Chief Insp. Jeanette Tabalan, former chief of the homicide section, was appointed chief of the detective house patrol unit. Replacing Tabalan is Sr. Insp. Alejandro Verquiña Jr.

Sr. Insp. Benjamin Reyes was appointed chief of the theft and robbery unit, while Sr. Insp. Leopoldo Mangilimot was designated chief of the anti-carnapping unit. Appointed as head of Task Force Galugad was Sr. Insp. Joselito Isa Teresa.

The WPD earlier announced that it was reviewing the performance and accomplishments of the station commanders and unit and division chiefs as part of plans for an impending reshuffle. A four-man panel was formed just for the new promotions.

High court foils land grab on Arboretum

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has shot down what it called as another "crass attempt" to grab land from the University of the Philippines in its campus in Diliman, Quezon City.

In a 28-page decision, the SC First Division upheld the state university's ownership of 17.9 hectares of land in Cubao, Quezon City, against the claims of Jorge Ortigas and Jacinto Mallari.

The land largely forms the Arboretum, the last remaining rain forest in Metro Manila.

"The case at bar is another crass attempt to grab part of the University of the Philippines' land in its campus in Diliman, Quezon City. Once and over again, this Court has ruled that the title of UP over its Diliman campus is indefeasible and beyond dispute. We cannot deviate from this ruling," said the ruling penned by Associate Justice Reynato Puno.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez concurred with Puno while Justices Consuelo Ynares-Santiago and Adolfo Azcuna dissented.

Santiago and Azcuna said that UP's ownership of the land was not supported by "clear, competent, and indisputable evidence."

The case began after Ortigas and Mallari squabbled in court with one Maria Romero over the ownership of the land.

On Feb. 18, 2000, the SC affirmed the ownership of Ortigas and Mallari of the property under Transfer Certificates of Title (TCT) Nos. 5288 and 12929.

The state university filed a motion for intervention, pointing out that the contested property actually formed part of its Diliman campus.

UP claimed ownership over the land under TCT No. 5682.

"Needless to say," the SC First Division said, "Ortiz and Mallari are precluded from claiming ownership of the land in dispute as the issue of ownership by UP has long been settled in numerous decisions."

Tondo...

Viewpage A12

But Atienza already said that declaring Tondo a calamity area would be too late, and might only cause panic among residents.

The delay in the passage of a resolution placing the area under a state of calamity was due to the committee's lack of quorum in the Council since Nov. 13, when session should have resumed after the Nov. 1 and 2 break.

But Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna said in an interview that the resolution was needed to make any disbursement from the calamity fund legal.

Second District Councilor Martin Lacson, who authored the resolution, said Tondo would remain a calamity area "until the situation has been resolved."

To date, more than 800 residents in Tondo has reportedly contracted acute gastroenteritis.

Three have been night confirmed deaths, all caused by severe dehydration.

The outbreak began on Oct. 23, with a second wave setting on Oct. 27. Since then, city health officials have noted a decrease in the number of reported cases.

Trouble in Baclaran

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TROUBLE is brewing in Baclaran.

A Barangay City ordinance allowing sidewalk vendors to sell their wares in the streets surrounding the Redemptorist Church has caused the ire of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando, who has led clearing operations against illegal vendors in the area.

"All the trouble we were through for nothing," Fernando said in an interview.

"The Parañaque City government decided to name that they cannot allow people to rend on the streets," he added.

Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez however said that the MMDA has been misinformed.

Marquez said the two-week old ordinance merely allowed Parañaque entrepreneurs to join a temporary agricultural enclosure fair that will introduce the city's products and provide a "break" for new businessmen.

Former Baclaran Church rector Msgr. Jose Francesco Villareal who used to head the Meisic police station, was named the new chief of the special reaction unit.

"The ordinance is not meant to favor any vendor but to help our people," Marquez said.

Fernando said in an interview that he will not withdraw his men from the area.

"I'm sorry to report this because the head of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office [Meco], retired Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, is my adoptive classmate at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1967."

For example, some officials at the Meco labor office allegedly pad their office expenses, sources said. Even the rent for the workers apartment, paid for by the Department of Labor, is padded.

Meco labor officials allegedly demand grease money from brokers of firms that employ Filipino workers. The amount demanded increases when workers complain of low pay against the companies.

Other unscrupulous labor officials also extort money from the complaining workers on the solution to their complaints would be speeded up.

Mateo, do you know what your subordinates are doing?

Most Chinoy kidnappings go unreported

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

...

(AN YOU blame the Filipino-Chinese if they go on a mass exodus to other countries where they are assured of their safety?

The only ones remaining here are either so wealthy they can hire bodyguards, or so daring they're taking the risk of being the next kidnap victim.

If all the Chinese-Filipino or Chinoys leave for safer shores, the country's economy will go awry. The Chinoys control the economy because they not only have the business acumen, they're also more industrious than their Malay brothers.

...

Most kidnap victims are Chinoys because they're easy targets.

Kidnappers know most Chinoy victims would rather pay ransom than go to the police. The family of a kidnap victim might end up spending more money in paying off the police than paying ransom.

In short, the Chinoys distrust the police.

Most kidnappings of Chinoys go unreported because of such distrust. Ransom is paid without the police being informed about the kidnapping.

The kidnapping of a Chinoy only comes to the nation when the victim is murdered by the kidnappers as in the case of Bill Church, a very young Coca-Cola executive.

An overly reported kidnapping of a Chinoy, then go unreported.

...

Several years ago, this columnist was consulted on how the kidnapping problem could be licked.

I gave my two cents worth. The people who sought my advice said they found it very practical and doable.

I'm not referring to executing—known locally as "salvaging"—kidnappers on the spot, although that could be an option when they're caught red handed.

But my proposed solution, although well-received, was not adopted.

While there are so-called "hoodlums in robes" in the judiciary, they are outnumbered by upright men and women who have never dishonored their positions as judges.

Recently, they have toiled for decades as magistrates. These judges, whose reputations are unblemished, should be counted with pointers in the appellate courts.

They should be no hesitation or parsimony when it comes to selecting justices to the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals. The promotion should be based solely on merit.

...

I understand that Judge Agustin S. Dizon of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) is being considered for promotion to the Court of Appeals or the Sandiganbayan.

The people of the Judicial Bar Council who will consider his appointment will never go wrong if they give him a chance to serve in the appellate court or the Sandiganbayan.

Dizon has been a judge since 1973. In age 50, he was already appointed municipal court judge. He was appointed RTC judge in 1983.

...

Judge Dizon is a widely read man. He can talk to you all night on any topic. Even law is entertaining. Reading is his hobby.

With his wealth of experience as a judge, plus his undisputed reputation and counter's degree in law, he will be an asset to the Court of Appeals or the Sandiganbayan.

His promotion is assisted not only by promising lawyers but also by lawyers, who have had the fortune of listening to his intelligent discourse.

...

The unofficial Philippine embassy in Taiwan is not managed right.

I'm sorry to report this because the head of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office [Meco], retired Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, is my adoptive classmate at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1967.

For example, some officials at the Meco labor office allegedly pad their office expenses, sources said. Even the rent for the workers apartment, paid for by the Department of Labor, is padded.

Meco labor officials allegedly demand grease money from brokers of firms that employ Filipino workers. The amount demanded increases when workers complain of low pay against the companies.

Other unscrupulous labor officials also extort money from the complaining workers on the solution to their complaints would be speeded up.

Mateo, do you know what your subordinates are doing?

MetroBriefs

Buy probe

SECRETARY Jose Lina Jr. yesterday ordered an investigation into the buying of Russian helicopters by the Department of National Defense. Lina directed Undersecretary Antonio Bautista to look into the matter in Cambodia. Lina directed Bautista, chief of Management and Technology Office in charge Chief Supt. Alberto Ebio to determine the motive behind the buying and to identify the seller. Lee was issued last Thursday by a private firm in Cambodia with a specified amount in the bank. Rubelyn Flores

Not forgotten

CLAIMING another round of criticism and accusations of negligence, Director Reynaldo Reyeses yesterday assured that the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources had not forgotten the case and is on going the Supreme Court to rule on the petition of its ex-police officers illegally terminated by the shutdown of Fisheries' Training Center and Station in San Miguel, Bulacan. Police officials Richard Ray Aquino, Dexter Manuel and the late Teofilo Vida have petitioned that they be reinstated to the duties they were forced out of by the shutdown of their Chief Christian, who said the firing order of the abduction and killing of Dacer and Corbito. Manuel and Aquino are at large, while Vida was also dead in Cavite. LARA P. Salamanca

Stink fixed

THE WILLAS after the Metro police-men complained of a foul-smelling stench coming from a septic tank near their police headquarters. The air is now considerably better, the team reported yesterday. The City Engineer's office has fixed the problem, which turned out to be a leaking pipe—not a leaking septic tank as earlier reported, according to Lt. Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr., city police chief. Lingan del Prado

EVEREADY

WARNING ON FAKE EVEREADY BATTERIES

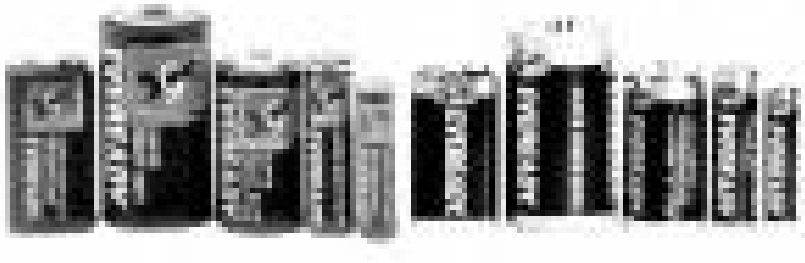
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

On October 3, 2003, six teams from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) swooped down on separate establishments in Manila suspected of distributing Size "AA" Batteries infringing on the EVEREADY™ Cat and 9™ trademarks. At 7:00 p.m., the CIDG operatives served search warrants on 1) warehouse allegedly owned or operated by one Johnson Chan, located in Binondo, and 2) warehouse stockroom allegedly owned or operated by one Terry Chua, in Tondo, all in Manila City. The CIDG also served search warrants on two establishments, namely WORLD OF ACCESSORIES in Tondo, and FASHION GEAR BAZAAR in San Nicolas, Manila. The foregoing strike was followed by mopping up operations on October 6, 2003, where the CIDG seized batteries infringing on the Eveready™ and CAT and 9™ marks from ECOSEN BAZAAR (in Binondo), FUNDOOR GENERAL MERCHANDISE (in Binondo), HONEST TO GOODNESS TRADING (in Binondo), and GOODNAME GENERAL MERCHANDISE (in San Nicolas) all in the City of Manila.

All told, CIDG operatives seized approximately 500,000 pieces of infringing batteries. Energizer Philippines, Inc. is now preparing the necessary criminal and civil complaint-charges against the said establishments. If convicted, the parties may be subject to penalties of up to five (5) years imprisonment plus fine.

Energizer Philippines, Inc. hereby warns all other establishments selling or distributing products infringing the Eveready™ trademark and Cat and 9™ design that it will not hesitate to bear down the full weight of the law on any party, individual or establishment engaged in the traffic of fake products.

PLATON MARTINEZ FLORES
SAN PEDRO & LEJERO
Counsel for Energizer Philippines, Inc.
[illegible]



Tondo declared calamity area

By Tarra Quismundo

AFTER local leaders officially declared a recent gunbattle in Tondo as looting ended, the Manila City Council put two districts in the area under a state of calamity.

The Council declared Manila's 1st and 2nd Districts as calamity areas during its session Tuesday. The action gives Manila Mayor Jocelyn Bolante Jr. the power to distribute part of more than P200 million in calamity funds for the affected areas.

The resolution also applies to Barangays 412 and 413 in Sampaloc, which were reportedly hit by fire and affected some 90 families.

TOMORROW

QUITE! President Estrada reads at his ailing 90-year old mother during a visit to her home in Tanay on Oct. 26, 2005. AP/File

Erap torn between ma, operation

Front page 1

and had developed chest abdominal uneasiness, "any one of which could end her life within minutes." Her favorite son, the ex-president now facing plunder and graft charges, was last allowed to visit on Oct. 26.

'Never mind'

Asked yet again whether Malacañang had offered a deal for him to make the 30-hop in exchange for his support of President Macapagal-Arroyo's meritorious bid, Estrada said: "Never mind politics. Never mind the election. I have only one motto."

And if it's the hospitalization that grants his bid? "I will climb it over-head," he said.

Malacañang yesterday reiterated that "the determination of medical necessity" in Estrada's case was the "exclusive prerogative of the fund (gratuitous revoking of its terms) to be."

But Mr. Macapagal assured her jailed predecessor that he could return to the country after his treatment abroad, should the Sandiganbayan give him permission.

"The former President will continue to enjoy all the rights that the law entitles him to, subject to the parameters set by the court. This includes the right to come home if he is ever allowed to go abroad," said Ignacio Bunye, presidential spokesperson.

But Bunye stressed that Mr. Macapagal was "not speculating on the court's position and we are not interfering with it."

Presidential Executive Secretary Mike Defensor, Malacañang's emissary to the Estrada camp, each re-said the document re-president had sought a government guarantee that he would not be barred from returning.

In a radio interview yesterday, Mr. Macapagal refused to comment further on Estrada's situation. "Basta ang alam ng presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo, ito ang sinabi ng doctors na kailangan ko," he said.

Bunye appealed to the President's critics to not relive her "extraordinary gesture" to the 2004-election loser.

Biblical precedent

On Nov. 16, newspapers quoted Defensor as saying that Mr. Macapagal "for humanitarian reasons... would be amenable to Estrada's being allowed to undergo (his) surgery in the US."

Everyone is entitled to express sincere compassion and no one should read politics or political interference into it," Bunye said. "The President has expressed her personal view on this issue based on her policy of unity and reconciliation, which is a matter of public interest."

In the dzBB interview, Mr. Macapagal reminded that primordial reconciliation required an acknowledgment of the offense committed, contrition, and a promise not to commit the offense again.

The President said the biblical story of Zacchaeus was the perfect illustration of true reconciliation. Jesus Christ himself "forgave and honored" the tax collector who had "stubbornness in his closet," she said, after he vowed to give half of his wealth to the poor and return to them four times of what he had stolen.

Suspected endgame

Private prosecutors hedging to secure Estrada's conviction thus found reason to suspect that Malacañang's endgame could be pardon for the ousted President.

"The stage is being set for this President or another to grant Estrada pardon," lawyer Leonard de Vera said in a news briefing yesterday.

De Vera outlined the course is that, he said, Malacañang was opposed by willing.

Constitutional requirement for pardon is for Estrada to be convicted and not appeal the ruling before the Supreme Court.

While abroad, Estrada could refuse to return, opposing claims that he cannot hope to get justice from Sandiganbayan or the high tribunal.

Unable to testify and present evidence in his defense, Estrada is likely to get a conviction, "thus removing legal obstacles for the sitting president to grant him pardon" in the name of unity and reconciliation.

Estrada could be pardoned, whether he admits it or not, the lawyer said.

In a statement the private prosecutors also said: "The issue is neither Estrada's right to life, nor his right to obtain medical treatment. The issue... is the rule of law versus a claim of special privilege." They agreed that Estrada needed medical treatment, but mentioned "it should be done here in the Philippines."

The lawyer and the Plunder Watch citizens' group appealed to the anti-graft court not to be swayed by Mr. Macapagal's "interference."

Plunder Watch said Estrada's lawyers had not presented "new compelling reasons" for the court to reconsider its earlier denial of Sandiganbayan's request. The group noted that the period had allowed prosecutors to a variety of local treatments, including a visit to a religious retreat to be dressed with "healing waters."

In the same briefing, government prosecutors threatened to "walk out" if the Sandigan allowed Estrada to go abroad.

"There [would be] no sense in continuing with the prosecution," said lawyer Wendell.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said he would rise, pick up if he to, Sandiganbayan "unbelievable" handling the case. He warned that letting Estrada go could set a bad precedent, where "any accused (person) with money can leave jail and go abroad." With a report from AP

PRIVATE Lawyers Ricardo Nepomuceno and Leonardo de Vera hold press conference to voice opposition to a proposal to allow former President Estrada to leave his hospital operation in the United States.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Cecile S. Mariano

Execs see brighter prospects in '04

By Doris C. Dumlao

BIZEX Philippine business leaders are "cautiously optimistic" that corporate earnings and economic performance will be much better in 2004 compared to this year, according to a business perception survey conducted by accounting firm C.L. Manahan & Co.-Deloitte.

In a presentation yesterday, CL Manahan partner Lei Bernardo said most Chief FS percent of corporate leaders were optimistic in their outlook on the Philippine economy over a three-year horizon, while only 15 percent were positive on the current outlook.

Of the respondents, 75.16 percent said they were "cautiously optimistic" on the economy over the next three years while 9.23 percent consisted of those who were "decidedly optimistic."

On the other hand, 12.31 percent declared they were "cautiously pessimistic" while 1.54 percent claimed to be "decidedly pessimistic."

On the corporate side, more than 60 percent of the respondents said they expected their businesses to perform better next year compared to this year, while 35 percent were positive on the economy's corporate outlook.

Specifically, 61.54 percent said they were "decidedly optimistic" on corporate prospects for next year while 36.65 percent said they were "cautiously optimistic" while 1.54 percent was "cautiously pessimistic" while none claimed to be "decidedly pessimistic."

"Majority of business leaders in the Philippines are optimistic about the next [few] and what is bright. In a three-year scenario, most business leaders expect that their corporations will perform exceedingly well and the new executive will progress and prosperity for the economy and the country," Bernardo said.

"Even in the current politically unstable situation, most business leaders are optimistic on their business continues, while they remain cautiously pessimistic to their economic outlook," she added.

The Philippines will hold its next presidential elections next year.

The business survey covered 65 respondents, 40 percent of which were chief executives, 23 percent chief finance officers, 9 percent sales executives and vice presidents, 4 percent board directors and 8 percent occupied other top posts.

The bulk of 75 percent of the respondents came from local corporations while 25 percent were from foreign corporations.

By industry breakdown, the most bullish sectors were those from telecommunications, real estate, pharmaceutical and manufacturing while the least optimistic were in the construction [illegible]

(See stock market report on Page B3)

Imports fell for 2nd straight month in September

THE COUNTRY'S import bill continued for the second straight month—although at a slower annual pace of 4.9 percent—in September from 8.3 percent in August as manufacturers remained cautious in building up inventory due to demand uncertainties.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that the country's expenditures for foreign-made goods fell to $2.83 billion from $2.19 billion in the same month last year, weighed down by the decline in spending for raw materials and semiconductor goods such as electronic inputs.

Importation of electronic products, which accounted for 47 percent of the total bill, fell by 3.4 percent to $1.41 billion.

As semiconductors, the country's top export, are a key of imported raw materials, a slowdown in import spending is usually seen as an indicator of weak export performance in subsequent months. This year, export earnings have been sluggish despite the recovery in the global economy as noted earlier.

On the other hand, purchases of capital goods grew by 6.6 percent to $1.3 billion led by telecommunications equipment and electrical machinery.

Expenditures for materials, fabricates and related materials jacked up by 4.5 percent to $987.21 million while payments for consumer goods declined by 17.2 percent to $331.12 million from a year ago.

For the first nine months of the year, the country's imports were up by 4.9 percent to $27.78 billion from a year ago, buoyed by the stockpiling of semiconductor

early in the year on producers' need to hedge against uncertainties from the long run.

Imports still edged out export earnings, which rose by a

Peephole power

BREAKTIME

Conrado E. Banal III

We refer to them simply as "brownouts," perhaps euphemistically, and so I'm sure you will be pleased to learn that they are coming again soon with a vengeance.

Long and frequent power failures give us social benefits. Among them are the reunion-and-message jokes. Imagine the possibilities!

Moreover, because you do not see electricity for the sheer abundance of it, and cannot mind the frustration, your electricity bills are never so gleamingly remarkable.

But most of all, since the root of this is generating-cache auxiliary engine economic woe, growing by leaps and bounds, this country may be left behind again.

What more can you ask for? Me have some here in Manila's Philippines. The Jose Pidal letter is dead. This is a good time to be a Filipino. Cross my heart!

* * *

BOTH good news you can conclude from a little overheard fact: NOT a single power generation plant is being built today, and NONE is even on the drawing board.

We putting up a power plant—from the marvelous planning to the tedious government process of approval, or from the hardball financing to the actual eyeburn-delayed construction—takes only all-of-the long years.

Experts in the energy sector foresee a need for at least one major power plant by 2006. No problem. That's still two years from today.

We still have time to bet, because we only need five years to build a freaking single power plant. Plus, we are already into the third year.

In this punctuality-challenged country, a three-year wait is nothing. I already spent roughly half of my life waiting.

Anyway, we need a new power plant right away because, despite the bad economy, at factories close downs one after another, we are electricity more and more, with the demand growing by about 8 to 9 percent a year.

By 2006, therefore, unless we are so gifted, we can actually invent a way to build a power plant in a jiffy, here come the "brownouts" again. Hey, hey...

* * *

REGIDOR for lack of any other legitimate reason to drink, we Gloriosan business section had a roundtable discussion with top officials of the Alsons group.

Of course we talked about the power industry. The Cebu-based alsons group went into the power business long before an even most bids.

Were they happy with the power rates, as subsidized by order of this cute administration of Gloriosers, meaning, certain power plants were losing heavily?

Brunson Alsons, whose employer wanted to actually bargain for "brunson," conceded that... to encourage new investments, our would have to adjust the rates.

But this executive in charge of the Alsons group's power business, could only see any adjustment forthcoming after the elections? but what I mean?

* * *

HOUSTON, we have a problem: for each day that we delay to make the necessary sacrifice to do, we only prolong our future agony by a day.

And for each week of delay, we extend for two forevermore by another week, and so on and so forth, until we just wake up one day and we have a power crisis again.

Already businesses in the Visayas and in Mindanao are suffering from a worsening power failure. With gains from heaven, the brownouts in certain areas in the south are getting longer every day.

In the energy capers, therefore, it is not a question of when the rest of the country will experience similar brownouts, because the contagion of the brownouts are already a certainty.

The only question is, at least to those in the know, how severe will the power shortage be about three or four years down the road.

For starters, will business establishments be forced to spend a fortune on power generators again, or will they just close down?

* * *

SET of course Energy Secretary Vicente "The Silent" Perez is no longer secret, and he tells every single day about foreign investors, whose secret identity we have yet to uncover.

I have to tell you this, but somebody needs... Enron is already in the south is, at this moment, not a single power plant is even in the planning stage.

And this cute administration of Gloriosers knows the real problem, and the real problem is, under this cute administration of Gloriosers, this country has become tough on cite-power users.

Just take a look at the state owned monopoly Napocor. It is bleeding. I am pleased to report that, for this year alone, Napocor is staring at a P136-billion loss.

And everybody knows that a good part of the huge loss is due to the power "subsidy" which, this cute administration of Gloriosers can sustain, but hopefully only until the 2004 elections.

* * *

UNLIKE in the power crisis of the early 1990s, we which a lot of public officials mouth gold. (On cite record Napocor cannot take the advantage.

As I said, Napocor is bleeding. That's why under the Ejeita, the law spelling out the power sector reforms, Napocor may no longer enter into contracts to buy the electricity from the private plants in the future.

The obvious question is, if anybody is crazy enough to invest in a power plant here, to whom does he sell the power. The Ejeita says that he sells to the private power distributors.

There are the "Meralcos" in this country. Unfortunately, the framers of our power distribution, including some electric cooperatives, are moving to cause alsons.

I am not sure that those unknown investors of blooom the Silent, who have to sink billions of millions of dollars in a single power plant, cannot wait to enter into supply contracts with Imus Lolly cooperative electric.

* * *

NOBY don't know how it began, but today we seem to enjoy this trip called big business bashing. Maybe it has something to do with "people power." It seems that we have canonized into a notion of... well, "activism."

Even the Supreme Court is said to be going that way although we grew up believing that, unanimously, Tarlac is the birthplace of activism more than a recovering alcoholic.

So we long ago, for example, the Supreme Court ruled that the biggest power distributor here, that evil Meralco, cheated us. Well, it charged us things which other power companies in the world have also been charging their consumers, and along.

Thus the court ruled that the evil, wicked, ruthless, criminal Meralco must, er, "refund" the, ahh, "consumers" some P35 billion.

Nobody could figure out how much of a would be refunded to the mulls, which already charged us for the short term they used, and which of course could no longer be refunded to us. Beautiful!

* * *

ANYWAY, the same Meralco must suffer from poor finances. The international credit rating agency Standard and Poor, for instance, gives it a "CC" rating.

In finance, such a rating is the equivalent of Meralco about to get knocked down by Pacquiao. It means the company is about to fail.

In the purchase of the money men, Meralco is showing signs of defaulting on its loans. Nobody in his right mind wants to touch it.

And word is banking is, unofficially, Meralco needs to refinance by matching loans this year. About P11 billion of those are falling due by December.

Bankers tell me that Meralco executives are trying to put up a brave face before the banks, insisting, for instance that its profit rate for 2Q'04 will be even more.

Well, ours, but the numbers say a different thing: owing more to banks than Meralco cannot even meet half of those P11 billion in maturing debts.

With its not-so-dead credit rating, it also cannot borrow fresh loans from banks just to pay off the maturing ones. And how can it produce the present executives to agree to a debt-rescheduling when everybody knows it is failing?

* * *

AND I have a problem with that, because I know that if Meralco goes under, the Lopezes of this world will not suffer one least bit of socio-economic.

Even without Meralco, they will still be armed, rich and famous, while we will suffer the bottomless brownstone of the service in between.

Believe me, that is going to be the result—or, the same "brownouts," more cute like the case of all that... well, "activism."

Why? Because to make ends meet, as the banks bound to ever in its deep, Meralco must soon cut spending for maintenance and upgrade. Uh-oh.

Nobody suffers less just the rest of us. Look, even companies do not exactly like power outages and shut down, and all that stuff. Sometimes things are sure to happen, because Meralco does not invest in new facilities.

And no hint in the big picture: We are going have power shortage, that's one, and for another trust, whatever power we get, we'll, but inferior quality, because it's like we are getting power service through the peephole or something. Wee, no?

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DISCLOSURES

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. recently bought a total of 480,000 of its own shares at P1.20 per share.

***

FILIPINVEST Holdings Inc. has filed its application for a lower tax-free capital to still-existing in Bonifacio Electrical ng Pilipinas.

***

ALCENAR'S fifth JP Swift Foods Inc.'s preferred shares will be until December 31, 2003. Shares will be redeemed at P10 per share and can be redeemed by submitting to the company's corporate secretary the duly endorsed stock certificate.

***

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank clarified that it is not in discussions to buy a stake in Philippine Bank of Communications. *Compiled by Melvin R. Tolosa / PDI Research*

Currency Watch

Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.02349000	1.00000	42.57400
Japan	Yen	0.00021000	0.00894	0.12100
England	Pound	1.42900	1.50000	64.14000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.30110	0.12800	5.45000
Switzerland	Franc	0.01700	0.72300	30.80000
Canada	Dollar	0.04000	0.17000	7.23000
Singapore	Dollar	0.01300	0.55000	23.50000
Australia	Dollar	0.01700	0.72000	30.80000
Bahrain	Dinar	0.11000	4.68000	200.00000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.00600	0.25500	10.90000
Kuwait	Dinar	0.07800	3.32000	141.90000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00000	0.00010	0.00400
Thailand	Baht	0.00500	0.21000	9.00000
UAE	Dirham	0.00600	0.25500	10.90000
Euro	Euro	1	1.18000	50.21000
Argentina/Peso	0.33700	0.00800	0.34000	
Brazil	Real	0.00800	0.34000	14.47000
Denmark	Kroner	0.15400	6.55000	278.80000
India	Rupee	0.01000	0.42500	18.10000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.00600	0.25500	10.90000
Mexico	Peso	0.00200	0.08500	3.62000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.01500	0.63800	27.20000
Norway	Kroner	0.13600	5.78000	246.00000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.00040	0.01700	0.72000
Peru	Nuevo Sol	0.00700	0.29800	12.70000
South Africa	Rand	0.00300	0.12800	5.45000
Korea	Won	0.00002	0.00085	0.03600
Sweden	Kroner	0.11100	4.72000	201.00000
Syria	Pound	0.00020	0.00850	0.36000
Taiwan	N Dollar	0.00700	0.29800	12.70000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00000	0.00000	0.00000

DESPITE PESO WEAKNESS

BSP to keep rates steady

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE POLICYMAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is likely to keep its overnight rates steady at 6.75 percent for borrowing and 9 percent for lending in its meeting today.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said monetary authorities were not inclined to touch key policy rates either way despite the continued volatility of the peso and a lingering weakness of the economy under a fairly low interest rate regime.

The central bank governor earlier hinted that a budget deficit blowout this year might force the Monetary Board to raise interest rates.

But the government's announcement yesterday that it kept the October deficit slightly below the P22.7-billion ceiling in October had put the fiscal program back on track with the full-year deficit target of P202 billion.

The central bank's policy rates and the 91-day treasury bill rate are benchmarks used by banks in pricing their loans. These are tools used to stimulate the economy.

"There is no compelling reason to change (overnight rates). The weakness of the peso is not driven by interest rates," Buenaventura said at the sidelines of the 9th conference on Good Governance and Responsible Citizenship yesterday.

The BSP chief said the peso "was fairly stable" given the volatile political environment. The peso yesterday closed at 55.365 to a dollar from 55.405 on Tuesday.

The central bank in this morning on the inflow of overseas workers' remittances to boost the supply of dollars in the market especially during the Christmas season. The BSP is expecting Filipinos abroad to send about $7.7 billion to their families this year, up from almost $7.2 billion in 2001.

Buenaventura said export receipts should also pick up toward year's end.

"The idea, especially during an election period, is to keep interest rates and exchange rates as stable as they can be. If rates in the United States go up next year, our flexibility may allow us to hop once where they are (now," the BSP chief said earlier.

Questions were being raised why the policy-making Monetary Board has not reduced its policy rates to spur growth in a slow-moving environment when the inflation rate had remain subdued and way below the BSP's target of 4.5-5.5 percent this year and 4-5 percent in 2003.

In a environment of inflation-targeting (that the BSP had adopted starting 2002), monetary policies must be pursued with the inflation target as the main consideration. So, inflation, or the rate of increase in the prices of goods and services, had averaged a subdued 3 percent this year.

But economic growth had been below target in the second quarter although authorities were expecting to meet the low end of the 4.2-5.2 percent growth in gross domestic product during the second half.

Buenaventura said he saw no further need to cut the central bank's overnight rates because these remained sufficient liquidity in the system to fuel the desired level of growth.

A 25-basis-point cut in overnight rates last July 2 was the only time the BSP had cut rates this year after tightening policies in March when it raised the reserve requirement by a percentage point and scrapped a swap scheme that paid a decreasing rate on bank deposits with the BSP.

Napocor to bid coal supply deals worth ₱2.16B on Nov. 25, Dec. 2

By Rosaul W. Dancuigo

NATIONAL Power Corp. is auctioning off on Nov. 25 and Dec. 2 coal supply contracts worth P39.32 million to about P2.16 billion, which represent a 37.26-million (P365 million) increase in the budget cap.

Up for bidding are three contracts to deliver a total of 975,000 metric tons of coal for the 1,200-megawatt coal plant in Pangasinan, 600,000 Mauritius plant in Zambales and 720,000 Pagbilao plant in Quezon.

A contract provides for 525,000 metric tons of coal for each power plant.

The auctions were originally set for Oct. 23 and Oct. 30, but Napocor postponed to give way to a team sent to China to appraise the shipping and production situations in the region.

In particular, the China mission investigated how the current shortage in supply and available cargo ships would affect Napocor's coal procurement.

In an interview, a Napocor official said the price ceiling for each contract was raised considering the higher costs due to the shortages.

For each of the final and Mauritius contracts, Napocor raised the budget to P2.160 million (about P731 million) from $52.9 million (about P680 million).

The budget for the Pagbilao contract was raised to $72.05 million (P661 million) from $58.35 million (P750 million).

The worldwide shortage in sea-faring bankers hit Napocor such that non-supplier had asked for an increase in freight payments for previously committed cargoes by about P171 million.

Abaca use in German car panels studied

By Christine A. Guglicar

THE PHILIPPINE abaca, the country's fine agricultural export, could again regain its prominence in the international market as German automakers are testing its strength and compatibility with their vehicles.

Automakers from Germany are experimenting on Philippine abaca to fiber and how it could be used in their vehicles' inner and composite panels.

Officials of the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) said in an interview that acquiring these contracts would be the big break that the abaca fiber industry was looking for in the last 15 years and this could uplift the abaca industry as a whole.

"We cannot divulge the names of these firms. Now we are working on how we could guarantee that we could supply their estimate requirements," said FIDA Administrator Cecilia Gloria Soriano.

She noted that FIDA had been doing extensive research on the absorptive rates of abaca fiber for paper to envelope manufacturing.

This year the country's abaca production has risen by 19.8 percent to 37,000 metric tons in the first nine months of the year from 47,870.887 in the same period in 2001.

Abaca exports to the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Singapore have risen to 6,613 MT from January to August this year from 4,717 MT delivered in the same period last year.

Soriano said the industry's production has not pushed as it has yet to recover from climates such as the abaca bunchy top and the bract mosaic because there was not enough funds from the government to buy insecticides and other herbicides.

"The government needs to solve this problem with the private sector," she said. "The P210 million funding requirement has not been released to us."

Toyota expands production facility in Laguna ecozone

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) has expanded its manufacturing facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, signaling the company's commitment to increase its export capacity and thus help boost the country's automotive industry.

TMP said in a statement that it has expanded its plant, which is situated at the Special Economic Zone, from 23 hectares to 77 hectares.

"The expansion reinforces our commitment to establish the Philippines as a major automotive operations base in Asia," said TMP president Yoshiharu Tabuca.

Tabuca declared this yesterday during the opening ceremonies with Philippine Economic Zone Authority Director General Lilia De Lima at the Toyota Industrial Complex in Sta. Rosa.

With the expansion, the company expects its revenue from the export of parts and components to Toyota's global network to significantly exceed this year's target of $200 million.

Toyota Motor Corp. of Japan managing officer Akira Okamoto said TMP was optimistic it would be able to reach the $350-million export target because of aggressive marketing efforts and high-quality labor.

He said local parts suppliers have become more competitive in terms of product quality, workmanship and technical expertise, thereby making the Philippines a preferred site for sourcing automotive parts.

"The Toyota Special Economic Zone will increase our export capacity, generate employment and produce world-class and highly skilled workers we all can be proud of," added Tabuca.

Michelle V. Rivera

AUCTION SALE

COLDWELL PROPERTIES & RESOURCES, INC. and COUTTS-HOBBS, INC. offer for sale through sealed bidding the following properties on an "AS IS, WHERE IS" basis with their minimum bid prices:

Sitio Pook, Barangay Hills	11 Hectares (lot)	400 sqm	₱ 750,000
Lot 3-A-1	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,600,000
Lot 3-A-2-B	Lakeshore Dr.	720 sqm	₱ 900,000
Lot 3-A-1-A	Marsh Dr.	720 sqm	₱ 900,000
Lot 3-A-3	Lakeshore Dr.	720 sqm	₱ 900,000
Lot 3-A-4	Lakeshore Dr.	720 sqm	₱ 900,000
Lot 3-A-5-B	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000
Lot 3-A-6	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000
Lot 3-A-7	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000
Lot 3-A-8	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000
Lot 3-A-9	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000
Lot 3-A-10	Lakeshore Dr.	800 sqm	₱ 1,000,000

Inquiries: Barangay Hills, Alabang-Zapote Road, Muntinlupa City. Tel. No. 809-0000

Sealed bids will be received by the undersigned at the Coldwell Properties & Resources, Inc. Business Center, 20 Lopez, Quezon City.

Bidding will be held on Dec. 10, 2002, 1:30 p.m. at the Coldwell Properties & Resources, Inc. Business Center, 20 Lopez, Quezon City.

The above properties will be sold through SEALED BIDDING to the highest bidder during an auction sale to be held on Dec. 10, 2002, 1:30 p.m. at the Coldwell Properties & Resources, Inc. Business Center, 20 Lopez, Quezon City.

Bidding documents (₱5,000 each) will start on Nov. 28, 2002. Upon approval of a bid, bidders should be advised by Dec. 10, 2002. For details, call 809-0000 or 809-1000 loc. 1000.

Oil imports up 26% in 1st 8 months

By Conrad P. Dominguez

THE CENTER'S net petroleum imports for the first eight months of 2005 went up by 26.12 percent to $2.39 billion from $1.89 billion in the same period last year.

Data gathered by the Investor showed that 75.86 million barrels of crude oil and refined petroleum products were brought in from January to August this year.

This was a 4.20-percent increase in volume from 72.80 million barrels in the comparative period of 2005.

From January to August, the country imported 46.4 million barrels of crude and 23.35 million barrels of refined products.

Eight-month crude imports saw an 8.04-percent increase from 43.29 million barrels in 2005 while product imports fell by three percent from 24.07 million barrels a year ago.

Exports of products jumped 23 percent to 11.6 million barrels from 9.77 million barrels as local refiners expanded their overseas market in a bid to just up profits.

The country was able to export about 1.9 million barrels of crude last year from the Malampaya oil reserve.

In September, the Department of Energy said net imports rose in the first five months due to a government requirement for local oil companies to maintain minimum inventory levels, which aimed to cushion the impact of the US-led war against Iraq on local prices and supply.

WORLD BANK ECONOMIST

Decision to hike tariffs bucked

By Elena B. Tevijes

THE WORLD Bank's lead economist for the Philippines yesterday said the government's move to raise tariffs on imported finished products was "not in the best interest" of the country in meeting economic objectives.

"The Philippines needs to be competitive and [production-wise] for that it needs to integrate," Uwe Deichsel said in a speech before an audience composed of government officials and corporate directors at the ninth Conference Series on Good Governance and Responsible Citizenship organized by the Institute of Corporate Directors.

In an interview after the speech, Deichsel explained that the global experience has been clear by increasing trade through lower tariffs, a country increases its economic competitiveness.

In the case of the Philippines, he said, the reduction in tariffs over the past 15 years had been instrumental in driving the tremendous increase in exports over the period.

It said October, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo issued EO 265 raising tariffs on imported finished goods back to the 1998 level. This time 5ish from many quarters.

Political economist Calixto Chikiamco said that by hauling the EO, the Arroyo administration has taken two steps backward in enhancing the economy.

The Foundation for Economic Freedom, which counts the backing of three former economic planning secretaries and two former tariff commissioners, cited several points against the EO.

The foundation noted that the increase in tariffs would not significantly increase government revenue because it retained low tariffs on imported inputs and therefore, industries would concentrate on importing raw materials.

The higher tariffs on imported finished goods would raise prices for consumers and penalize a vast range of productive activities. An example of the latter is higher prices of fresh refrigerated meat and motor vehicles and this would punish the country's transport sector.

FEF president Alex Magno noted: "Since 1991, the value of our exports grew four-folds and reached $34 billion in 2002. The attendant stochastic stuff of thousands of quality jobs in exporting industries. Lowering tariff rates and liberalizing trade was even more meaningful to consumers since it brought down the cost of consumer durables."

According to Chikiamco, the EO 265 was nothing more than an act to bestow "economic rent" to unearned profit to certain favored, and politically powerful business-ers.

"It is highly likely that the response of these favored, protected industries is to increase prices, fattening their bottom line without adding any value to the economy," he said.

Oursourcing firm to buy Indian unit for P220M

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFOSOFT Inc., Asia's leading business process outsourcing firm, has signed a deal to acquire 100 percent of an India-based service provider for about P220 million ($4 million).

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, SPI president and chief executive officer Ernest Ong said the acquisition ranked the Philippine IT service exporter's entry to India and was a "strength fit to its strategy of building a global organization with multi-country service delivery platforms."

"The combined operational and marketing capabilities of Infosys and SPI Publisher Services are expected to contribute to the company's profitability moving forward," Ong added.

For its current fiscal year, SPI expects Infosys to contribute annual revenue of approximately $2.5 million, complementing the existing earnings of its book and journal production services unit. The deal is expected to take effect within the first half of 2006.

Based in Bandra-Kurla, India, Infosys is a top software full service supplier to leading scholarly and professional book publishers, including Elsevier, Blackwell, Oxford, Inderscience Press, Macmillan and John Wiley & Sons. The company has plans to expand in Europe.

Its capabilities include a wide array of design, project management, editorial and production functions. Its resources include customized "value-added" project management capability in St. Louis, USA, as well as three production facilities with 200 employees in India.

Frank Stumpf, president of SPI Publisher Services, said with the acquisition of Infosys, this SPI unit was now in a position to offer maximum flexibility in terms of onshore and offshore resources.

"The Infosys acquisition strengthens our execution of the strategy in the book market due to the infusion of both its onshore and offshore capabilities," Stumpf said.

Manila Water allots P15B to replace pipes

By Christine A. Gaylican

MANILA Water concessionaire Manila Water Co. Inc. has earmarked P15 billion over the next 10 years to replace old pipes that could be sources of unsafe drinking water.

The Ayala-led water concessionaire that has taken over the century-old system formerly managed by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System is spending more than P2.6 billion to replace about 300 kilometers of aging pipelines and lay an additional 100 kilometers of pipes this year.

Manila Water president Jeremiah T. Aquino said yesterday that this was the company's effort to curb its non-revenue water that were primarily due to illegal connections.

He noted that its NRW projects, wastewater and sewerage expansion are a chunk of MWC's capital investments, which are financed through internally generated funds and loans.

Aquino noted that curbing off illegal connections was only half the battle in the water service business.

"The other half requires the company to make a big effort to privatize your capital expenditure programs and make no excuses of replacing everything that needs to be replaced from obsolete asbestos concrete, cast iron pipes to essential service connections," Aquino said.

He stressed that this was the only way to curb external losses and actually convert them into billed volumes.

"The urban poor households constitute 30 percent of the Manila Water's customer base of 4.8 million Manila residents. They also have an average consumption of 30 cubic meters a month," Aquino said.

Aquino, however, appealed to urban poor residents to guard their water connections from illegal connections.

US, Latin American nations to talk on trade pacts

MIAMI—With prospects for an American-wide free-trade pact up in the air, the United States pushed ahead on Tuesday with plans for more comprehensive agreements with individual countries in the region.

Acting trade officials from 34 countries—all of the Western Hemisphere except Cuba—continued debating how to transform the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement. US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick announced plans to begin trade talks with the customs unions of Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as Panama.

Zoellick said he expected negotiations with Colombia and Peru to begin in the second quarter of next year, and talks with Bolivia and Ecuador could begin at a later date.

The four countries now get duty-free access to the US market for a wide range of their exports under legislation aimed at fighting drug production in the Andean region.

Those preferences expire in 2006 and the Andean nations have been eager for a free-trade pact to lock them in.

Zoellick said the Andean trade talks would build momentum for the FTAA, which has been dogged by disagreements between Brazil and the United States over what should be in the pact.

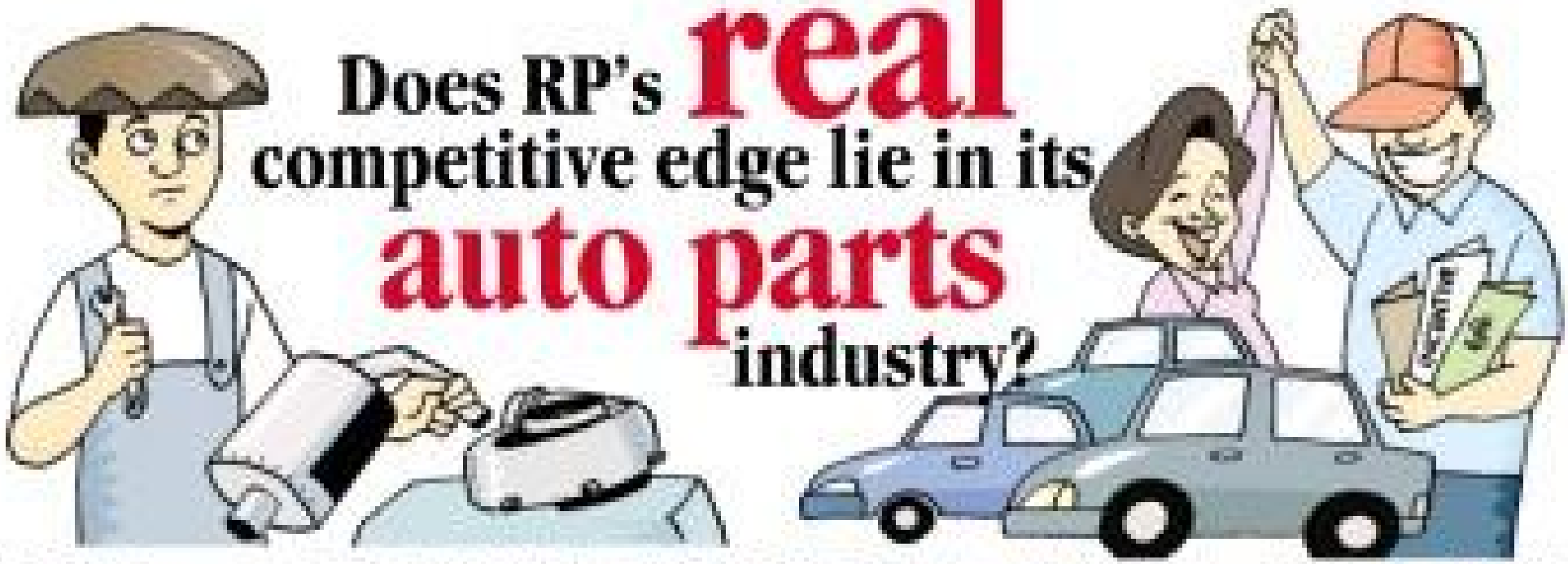
"The United States is deeply committed to securing a hemispheric marketplace through a comprehensive FTAA," he said, using the Spanish acronym for the American-wide pact.

Oskar Nastasi, a Bolivian Embassy official, said Bolivia would like to see a free-trade agreement with the United States "as soon as possible."

Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are considered the Andean region's poorest countries, and Washington's enormous appetite for smaller, bilateral agreements shows it can more easily dictate terms, said Sam Gejdenson, president of the Washington-based Andean Council of Trade Unions

MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Pangilinan



Does RP's real competitive edge lie in its auto parts industry?

By Charles E. Bolton

(First of two parts)

THE LOCAL automotive industry believes that having more Philippine-made parts installed in millions of vehicles sold around the world is a worthy long-term goal for the government to embark on.

For the last decade motor vehicle parts makers have consistently increased their export performance reaching $1.17 billion (about P52 billion) last year and is expected to reach $1.5 billion (P67.5 billion) by 2009.

Their parts and components are currently being exported to 139 countries and new buyers around the world.

"Automotive parts and components can have bigger economic impact to the country, considering its higher domestic content, technological intensity, job creation and positive role in the development of the auto industry," said Rhoderick Evans, president of the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines.

The MVPMAP is composed of 120 automotive parts and components manufacturing companies, 70 percent of whom considered as small and medium enterprises.

Provide similar support

SPECIAL REPORT

Early this month, Malacañang signed Executive Order 334 granting export incentives to assemblers engaged in the export of completely built up (CBU) vehicles.

This is in line with the government's thrust to make the country an auto export hub in the Southeast Asian region.

"If cars will be provided with a similar incentive grant (tariff preferences through the application of export credit), then our motor cars complement whatever economic benefit these CBU exporters can give this country in the forms and much more," explained Evans.

Evans revealed that the automotive industry is pressing for the expansion of the Import-to-export capabilities like the increased volumes of Philippine-manufactured vehicle parts exports in export-to-import by 2009.

Incentive for assemblers

Under the government's export incentive program, Philippine auto assemblers engaged in CBU exports can avail of tax perks starting next year until 2008.

Export incentives will come in the form of subsidy amounting to $300 per CBU, with a minimum volume of 10,000 units.

As of now, only Ford Motor Group Philippines can benefit from this export incentive package as it is the country's only auto exporter of CBU vehicles to its neighboring Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) countries.

Other automakers like Honda Cars Philippines announced its plan to export CBUs by 2007 while Mitsubishi Motors Philippines plans to ship out its Adventure by 2008.

Exports to Thailand, Indonesia

Within the framework of the Asean Free Trade Area (Afta), Ford Philippines currently exports the Ford Lynx and Mazda Protégé sedans and the Ford Escape and Mazda Tribute SUVs to Thailand and Indonesia.

Ford Philippines' P4-billion, 100,000-sq.m. facility has current production of about 15,000 units, which still falls short of its optimum capacity of 40,000 units a year.

To date, the Ford Philippines program has exported 12,000 units, a figure that is expected to reach 17,000 units by year-end.

Only few will benefit

But not everybody believes the auto export perks program will benefit all automakers in the country.

Last month, an official of the Japanese embassy in Manila said the country still has a long way to go before it can be a major CBU exporter and expressed doubt that the program will entice more manufacturers to export CBUs in the future.

The same Japanese official believes we have more should have invested to focus on the auto parts industry that could up a bigger segment of the Philippine industry, adding that auto parts makers have been exporting for several years and have the competitive edge.

"Giving us added incentives can help boost the auto parts industry as we still lack basic requirements such as materials engineering which the country still imports from other countries," suggested Rafael Yabut, MVPMAP executive director.

Said Villareal, "Without export incentives, it would be difficult to attract additional investments which could positively address the prohibitive costs of importation of the necessary raw materials, completely knocked down and other components, making port and warehousing facilities and transport services, labor, the additional processing requirements, packaging and packing for export and back-logged through the same process for eventual reimbursement."

ROASTED Pigeon with Grilled Duck Liver

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chels Banal-Formoso

Wild over French game, Chinese seafood and Angeles 'halo-halo'

Tastes

Chef Cyrille Soenen's repertoire for the ongoing Wild Game Festival at the Prince Albert, Hotel InterCon is to die for

THE GIFT of family and true friends, a job that one truly loves and, last but not the least, a splendid meal with an exquisite glass of wine. In the end, these are the only things that truly matter. Lately I've been blessed with all three and much more.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aquino

Not many moons ago, I was privileged enough to work with the best Frenchchef in the Philippines, if not **ask me, perhaps in all** of Asia Cyrille Soenen, the InterCon's chef executive. Together, we did a French Filipino Fusion Festival and my respect and admiration for him has not ceased since.

When Cyrille cooks, **it's always a feast for a king.** And his repertoire for the ongoing Wild Game Festival at the Prince Albert is no exception.

Organic

All you pate-fried foie gras freaks are simply going to have to give it up for the most scrumdiddlyumptious du Canard Confit et Foie Gras de Canard (Duck Confeit and Foie Gras Terrine). It melts in your mouth plus you can finish the flavors off with a sweet sip of chilled Domaine Laygent Petit Manseng 2003.

The only word that comes to mind to describe Cheapa'sense is orgasmic! If I have to **put a wager of the little that I own,** I'll gamble it all on that and Gen-own better, it's a sure THING.

Our lunch progressed to more exotic flavors, like a la Russe with SACHERTORTA, **Medallion of Filed with Foiegrave of Bayonne** Pricks, Roasted Pigeon with Grilled Duck Liver. All excellent in character and flavor, flavor **in front France or season's primer. It was an al**ternoon to remember, made even more memorable by the conversation and the memories of **times shared.**

My friendship with this great French master is one that I'll always treasure. As they say, the best things in life are free, but though his friendship comes free, please bring cash and as a candle card (or sample his culinary masterpieces). Duck liver and wild French game are, after all, quite expensive! The Gastes promise **that will be an all-the-weekend,** don't miss it! And to you, mon ami Cyrille, bonne!

Side trip to China

From France I took a trip bound for China. I landed in Dilijan and found myself in a restaurant called China Club to celebrate the birthday of a dear friend, Miriam Quiniot. From the booming grounds of France, my taste buds took a turn to the never the best of what the east could offer. Fresh crabs with one of the yummiest dipping sauces I've ever tasted. The four mushrooms with sea asparagus, lobsters in garlic, fish lips, steamed grouper and braised pork with fried bread were equally good. I had a great time in quaint China Club, **thanks to the owners Lessie Co and Willy Ly.** Great seafood and grand wine list to afford while grazed.

Mixed blessings

It didn't all end in China. As has been my **principle in life, I went in search of my happi**

CHEF Cyrille Soenen

Wild over French game, Chinese seafood and Angeles 'halo-halo'

From page B1

one and found it in Angeles, Pampanga—Cousun's Halo-Halo! Fresh beans, corn, marzipan and bananas sweetened to perfection with velvety chunks of pastillas de leche. Need I say more?

I've never really been a halo-halo freak; I found those I've tried to savor more of one thing or the other, none of which ever really melded grandly in flavor. It either tasted much like tutukan or cake or of ants but thing. If you ask me, this is my personal choice for the best halo-halo! Thanks to the family of the late Tom Nagano, for introducing me to Cousun's halo-halo and grudgingly, for the excess baggage that I now carry around the hips!

Where can I buy sun-dried tomatoes in Manila. I've been looking around but can't find them. I chanced upon a duty free store in Clark but what they have them is bottled sun-dried tomatoes soaked in liquid. Also, would you happen to have a simple pesto recipe that uses sun-dried tomatoes and some herbs.

MEL

Sun-dried tomatoes are available every where—Rustan's, Unimart, Santis, Terry's. I personally like using sun-dried tomatoes in oil, especially for pastas. And of course, I have a great, delicious and simple recipe for you. Here goes:

1-cup olive oil
6 tbls large shrimp, peeled, deveined
5-6 shallots, sliced
12-14 sliced drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
2 tbsp chopped garlic
3 c canned tomatoes, drained, seeded and chopped
½ cup chopped fresh basil
crushed red pepper flakes, to taste
salt and pepper, to taste
200-300 g cooked pasta, preferably spaghettini

Heat oil, add shrimp and sauté until it changes color, remove shrimp from pan, set aside. Add all ingredients except the canned tomatoes. Sauté until shallots are translucent. Add canned tomatoes and simmer until sauce thickens. Add basil.

Return shrimp and any juices in sauce; stir to heat through. Add pasta to sauce. Toss over medium heat until sauce coats pasta. Season with salt, pepper and pepper flakes. Garnish with basil.

DUCK Cubeen and Foie Gras Terrine

HARE a la Royale with Garnitures

Series of questions from Mark

They say that the secret to a delectable Tiramisu is in it's cheese, how true?

"Anonymous"

Aside from hunch, where can I buy Mascarpone cheese? Is it possible to buy Mascarpone that is not expensive? Have tried some Tiramisu which didn't use the said cheese and it didn't taste quite as good though.

I am not certain if there is a brand of mascarpone other than Galbani available in the Philippines. Santis/Greenhouse are the distributors of the brand. However, I've seen Galbani mascarpone in Rustan's and Unimart. Sorry, but as I've always said, the best dishes come from the finest ingredients, and the finest and freshest ingredients are, and to say, almost always quite expensive!

A bit of Mascarpone trivia: This butter-rich triple cream cheese comes from Italy's Lombardy region. It's cheese made from cream milk and has a very delicate flavor. It is usually served with fruit and most popularly known as the base ingredient for pick me up, the festival institution for Tiramisu.

And my answer... Once a time, always a fake! Tiramisu tastes from anything other than mascarpone will always look, smell and taste like a fake!

Also, I tried doing your New York Style Cheesecake and it turned good. However, I noticed some lumps even before popping it into the oven. Now this I got rid of it? What brand of cream cheese did you use?

To ensure that your cakes are lump free, I suggest that you beat the cheese in the mixer with a wire whisk for a good 10 minutes. Another suggestion would be not to overbeat the eggs when used as they tend to become too thin. Philadelphia cream cheese.

Too much fat in food, and other consumer concerns

THE CONSUMER
Marivilla Velasco Gavan

Do we really have nutrition-salary overload? Shielding the consumer of fat in a lot of consumer products in the market? A diet high in fat, as we know from our basic nutrition information, is one of the leading causes of life-threatening diseases such as coronary ailments and cancers, just to name a few of the colon, prostate and breast.

And yet, most of the top-selling products in the market like corned beef and meat loaf are practically swimming in fat. Add to that the favorite tanggueses, tapas and ramen made from the most fatty portions of meat cuts. The list is endless if we include fast food fare and street food.

Some food, as we recently found out, is a nutritionist's nightmare. We shocked the friends served by neighborhood street-food vendors and found out that most of the dishes that were served every day were topped by sachets of liquid fat. Furthermore, various cuts of what he were indispensable ingredients in many dishes.

We also found out that hamburger patties sold by food vendors were made of ground pork most instead of beef. To give patties the taste and aroma of real hamburgers, most of beef is used for deep-frying.

When we brought our findings to the attention of the food vendors said, "Common like these food customarily to fat."

Lasag visitor has unsavory impression

This letter from April Cinco is a wake-up call to health and sanitation officials of Lasag City. A first-time visitor to the North, she was impressed by what my signage "Did come to the cleanest and greenest component city" She also looked forward to having a taste of the famous special Lasag empanada. (The batter is made of rice flour and the filling is a special mixture of local longganisa, egg and grated papaya or mongga bean sprout.)

Her good impressions turned into a disappointment, however, when she saw how two street vendors richest sanitary standards when they prepared the special empanada.

Cinco wrote: "The ingredients were placed in uncovered containers that were washed along the street. The vendor mixed the ingredients with bare hands. Nonetheless, but still polished at that. Since leaving my discomfort, my host brought me to another vendor, this time near the market. I was even more disappointed to see another behind the vendor who seemed unmindful of the pests.

"I am writing this, not just to create unnecessary issue on the dismal if we cannot prepare empanadas the clean way, what else can we offer here?"

Friendly reminder to customer service

In case the customer service people of Smart have forgotten, we are reminding them about the reader's complaint we sent them last Oct. 13.

Reader Aurora V. Hizon was interested in Smart's Talk 'N' Text SIM upgrade, a promo that offered to double the memory of a phone directory and message lists. Instead of doubling the memory, however, the supposed upgrade "deleted previous stored messages, and the entire phone directory was gone."

But, to add insult to injury, Smart's customer service denied that a transaction between them had transpired. Realizing, maybe, that a receipt could prove the transaction, the store clerk promised that she'd consult with her supervisor.

Hizon wrote to us last Nov. 3: "I was just wondering what happened to my complaints. I guess we've given them enough time since you forwarded my complaint to them last Oct. 13."

Action, at long last!

Carely Santos (cesantos@yahoo.com) wrote: "This is a feedback to the complaint I wrote to you last Oct. 13. Manila Water Company Inc. finally fixed the leak seventeen, Nov. 5, after nearly three months of constant fist bow-ng!"

From Lagunas L. Galang comes this news: "Thank you for publishing my letter 'I Love Intl's story "Retirees Loose Bank Savings" last Aug. 7. It took all of six months, but finally, the bank made restitution on their employee's misfortunes."

Five years ago, former schoolteacher V. Lamela deposited her entire retirement pay in a bank and entrusted the account in a bank employee. When she needed her savings for medical needs last year, she discovered too late that the bank employee had "emptied" her savings deposit and had resigned from the bank. She is now 78 years old, blind and sickly.

Lamela's sister C. Galang represented her in seeking restitution from the bank. She asked, "How did the bank employee manipulate my sister's account without the bank knowing some of it? And, how did the employee get clearance from the bank at the end of her employment?"

E-mail the author at mgvisyo@i-next.ia.com.ph

Beef and wine festival in Intramuros

BUFFALOO: American Bar and Restaurant features The Best in the West Christmas offerings which include Stuffed Buffalo, Roasted Jamonera, Shrimp and Ribs Platter, Grilled Steak ala Poker, Burgos is served at 2 if Tomas/Morato Extension, South Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City; 371 The Podium, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City; and the 30 Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City. Call 9277431, 9981811 or 16 or 6872254.

DINING OUT

KITCHEN, located at Megamall and Greenbelt 3, Makati, features appetizers, soups, salads, pasta and noodles, sandwiches, rice bowls, desserts, drinks, coffee and tea and alcoholic beverages. Call 9149800/9149888 (Megamall) and 8817400/8183800 (Megamall).

KH Japanese restaurant, located at Greenbelt 3, Makati, offers appetizers, salads, soups, seafood, vegetables, meat and poultry dishes, sushi, sashimi and vegetarian maki.

CHINA GARDEN (4/F Summit Palace) offers various specialties, [illegible]. The restaurant's chefs [illegible] baked with mangoes, stewed/deep prawns with sautéed seafood, and fried prawns with liquid or egg whites, stewed prawns Szechuan style, black pepper prawns fried and, prawns with Hu Pan noodles in chili oil, deep-fried prawns in ginger sauce, steamed prawns with silvergloss noodles and Shao King wine.

The Library Lounge presents Review

[illegible] high Tea until Nov. 30. The buffet has tiered stands and cranberry cookie, chocolate-chip with mint and peanut butter scone, maple cheesecake with blueberry topping, raspberry mousse, ice cream with peach meringue, tiramisu Panna with strawberries and cream, mini-cake delicacy, banoffee pie with white fondant and Mineral jelly with chocolate rice. Call 834-7377 ext 8888888

PIZZA HUT introduces the rectangular-shaped Bistro Pizza. It has garlic, basil and oregano baked into the crust. It comes in a light and fluffy crust or thick, crisp and crunchy on the outside.

RICHMOND HOTEL presents holiday goodies like chicken galantine, honey-roasted pork, fish pancake with tomato cream sauce, pork pancake with apricot and date, baked tamales, Indonesian spareribs, Indian prime rib carving, fruit cake, cinnamon toast roll, banana walnut bread, cinnamon roll, pecan pie, apple pie and chocolate mousse cake until Dec. 28. Call 8397777.

PARADISE HOTEL Manila will hold a Christmas party buffet dinner (Dec. 24), Christmas day buffet lunch and dinner (Dec. 25) and New Year's Day special lunch and dinner (Jan. 1, 2004). Call 8210881/8217801.

MARKET! MARKET! LE introduces Thanksgiving smiles. 27 at Island Cafe. The restaurant will serve an extra-generous lunch and dinner buffet. Call 8908884.

SWISS HOTEL Manila launches Hotel's first anniversary. 21 at Swiss Dining Valentine Restaurant. The festival offers spring rolls, prawn soup with coconut milk, grilled duck salad, grilled pork with sesame seed served with black sticky rice and grilled beef with lemongrass. The hotel also presents Promenades at Autumn until Nov. 30 at Shirley Japanese restaurant. Wine dinner also served au carte. Call 8833888.

SHIRLEY'S offers party time packages. Call or visit any Shakey's restaurant.

SOMABOL Korean restaurant recently opened at Resorts Place Manila's Tower Bank. Its menu includes regular fare, ala-carte dishes, appetizers, and noodles.

Christmas goodies to bake

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

FOR sure by now a lot of us already have our Christmas list—who to give, what to give, budget per recipient, not to mention a menu for Christmas Eve.

Here are baking goodies to bake and pack for gift-giving—a busy season, an apple cake to take advantage of the abundance of apples and a buttery fruit cake.

Roll up your sleeves, don an apron and start baking. These goodies will surely surprise family and friends. Happy baking!

Coconut Pineapple Bites

200 g pack desiccated coconut
200 ml can Full cream condensed milk
¼ cracked butter
½ cup white sugar
4 whole eggs
1 ½ canned crushed pineapple, well drained

Preheat the oven to 325 °F. Line 60 mini muffin moulders with baking paper. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, put all of the ingredients in the order given above. Mix well with a wooden spoon or wire whisk. Using a spoon or pastry bag, distribute the mixture into batter equally among the prepared moulders.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from the moulders immediately and allow to cool in a wire rack.

Apple Quickbread

2 ½ coarsely chopped green apples
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ white sugar
2 ½ dark brown sugar
1 ½ cups oil
4 whole eggs
2 tsp cinnamon powder
1 tsp vanilla
1 ½ tsp fine salt
1 ½ tsp sifted baking soda
½ tsp baking powder
1/3 c raisins

Topping
1 c whole walnuts or blanched pili nuts

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Line the bottom of six mini loaf pans measuring 3 x 6 inches (3 ½ inches high) with baking paper. Grease the sides of the pan with shortening, then the greased areas with flour and tap off excess. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, pour the ingredients for the apple bread in the order given above. Mix well with a rubber scraper until blended. Divide the cake batter equally among the prepared moulders. Decorate the top with nuts and bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of each loaf comes out clean.

Allow the cakes to age for a full 24 hours before serving. Keep chilled.

No-Molasses Fruit Cake

4 c sifted all-purpose flour
2 tsp sifted baking powder
½ cup fine salt
2 c glazed fruits
2 c raisins, rinsed
½ c barrel, softened
1 cup orange juice
2 c white sugar
3 whole eggs
Soaking Syrup
½ c butter
1/3 c white sugar
2 tbsp water
1 tbsp dark rum

Preheat the oven to 225 °F. Line the bottom of six mini loaf pans measuring 3 x 6 inches (2 ½ inches high) with baking paper. Grease the sides of the pan with shortening. Dust the greased areas with flour. Tap off excess and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, salt, glazed fruits and raisins. Set aside.

In another large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer on high speed, cream the butter together with the flavoring and the sugar for five minutes until the mixture becomes very pale. Add the eggs and continue to beat only until blended. Gradually add the flour mixture while beating the mixture at medium speed.

Divide the cake batter equally among the prepared moulders. Bake for 25 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in the center of the cake comes out absolutely clean.

Immediately unmold the cakes and transfer to wire racks. Brush the prepared soaking syrup all over. Allow to stand for at least two hours before refrigerating.

To prepare the syrup, melt the butter over low heat in a small saucepan. Add the sugar and the water and allow to boil. Remove from heat and add the rum. Use immediately.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City and at the Julia Magpili Kitchen in Makati. Call 7217726 or e-mail dorothycooking@hotmail.com

Cooking and baking demonstration

LEARN new ideas and delicious recipes in "In the Holiday Mood" cooking and baking demonstration on Nov. 22, 3-4 p.m., at the San Miguel Head office cafeteria.

Presented by San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, the event will feature culinary expert Reggie Aquino and chef Joey Pons. Registration is free but on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested participants can exchange two wrappers of Magnolia Gold Butter, Thai Cream Cheese, Magnolia Cream Cheese, Purefoods Hotdog and Purefoods Ground Beef, Monterrey and Magnolia Chicken Gratin for an entrance ticket. Call 6719075 local 852, 404 or 407.

ATTENTION

Ad Congress Delegates

Hold on to your Inquirer passports --

Your friendly guide to the City of Baguio and Your access to discounts and privileges at these stores:

Mile-Hi Center
91 Marcos Highway

Mile-Hi Center, Camp John Hay

SM Fiesta Strip
SM City Baguio

Angie's Tart & Tidbits — SM Fiesta Strip, Mile-Hi Center

Carlos Pizza — Mile-Hi Center, SM Fiesta Strip, SM City Baguio

Brought to you by:

My mother's 'torta'

By Gina Hays

[Editor's Note: The following is the winner in an entering essay in the recently concluded Doreen Fernandez Food Writing Competition.]

In our house in Cebu, torta is not omelet. It is not fashioned out of beaten egg mixed with ground meat, or slivers of ham, or roasted eggplant. Torta is a light cake, evocative of celebration, bearing the definitive stamp of my mother, and the one thing that is hard-wired into my brain as the culinary equivalent of home.

Flour. Lard. Coconut wine called tuba. Eggyolk. Sugar. Milk. Butter-cream for storing. A capitalizing of vanilla for color, texture and essence, and a public schoolteacher who learned to whip all these into gustatory humour from observing her paternal grandmother in the pre-war years. The basic ingredients of torta.

Tuba was the leavening agent. Back then, in narrow town a stroller's toilet that had benches outside where to rest, to chat. The merchants would gather for tuba talk fabricated by their preferred evening libation. It had to be pasteurized fresh, sweet and warm and slightly frothy, not the day-old sour stuff called bahal which took on a vinegary and viral quality. My mother would set aside her tuba for yeast-assisted baking powder or yeast, despite the sight bias of the dough to rise. Because for a minute there we would be no different from Salcedo-bought cake.

In a time when we are inundated with gaudy, over-sweet cake that are whipping of layers of lard, you would think that she would have confined it to a tin filler, and more politically correct alternatives. You think wrong. She insists on, and becomes of its preservative qualities, as before he dismissed.

GINA Hays, runner-up, dusts off the torta her mother made.

Like a fiesta

The assembling of all these ingredients on the dining table after dinner and the removal of an assortment of mixing bowls, baking pans, flour sifter, old newspapers and the rest of her baking paraphernalia from kitchen cabinets, gave the house that distinct anticipatory buzz of celebration associating from fiesta or Christmas.

My brother and I, both of grade-school age, played a vital part in the elaborate preparation for not getting in the way as a consequence to our presence, by virtue of originally activated as with the flour, and most critical, phase of the entire operation.

After the egg yolks and sugar were creamed, milk and tuba added in, flour and lard incorporated in round circular motions, came with each one spoonful into the mixture, and batter poured into small pans lined with greased paper, my brother and I took turns—gingerly patting tuba and other kitchen debris on top of the dough. Our not-so-hidden agenda of course was to see the leftovers remain. We were reportedly admonished to steer clear of the dough in the slightest movements would, as were warned, wreak havoc on the fermenting process.

Kitchen emergency

The next morning, my mother would expect her handiwork and know at one glance if the dough rose to her satisfaction. It had to be just so, not too little so to result in a heavy cake, not too much that the whole mixture would collapse on itself.

Over time, extreme measures had to be taken to remedy the over-ingredients of the making of the Torta: the dough, perhaps owing to cold weather, sank and failed to fermentation through the night. Exclaimed, my mother took frantic action and, like a pro-touch accustomed to dealing with the unfolding calamity, hauled everything out to the front yard for an instant sun exposure. Since I have no recollection of eating that torta, I happily assume that her last ditch measures must have worked that time.

Golden brown

In the old days, she baked in a clay oven, with hot tin top and bottom. With the advent of the gas range, this process has been made nearly less strenuous and tedious and allows for the production of several batches we'll just use preparation.

The outcome of this entire exercise is a golden brown cake, dusted with a thin film of sugar on top, light and moist on the inside, with a slight whiff of anise emanating from every preferred slice. One sometimes bites into an anise seed or a raisin, and this contrast in taste and texture makes for a delightful discovery with every forkful. It is an easy light and rich, simple yet filling, appealing yet I suspect also an acquired taste.

Undoubtedly traditional

My claim comes from an undoubted reliance on traditional ingredients in the face of modern-day alternatives. I urge my mother to privilege if better for her regular clientele, but it has also dawned on me that her utter lack of concern for presentation is in keeping with the pastry's manner. Substance and tradition taking precedence over form. Torta cake it with giddy glee feeling up to the fiesta, as well as Jay Dreambox of memories whose remembrance is sometimes broken by the arrival of unexpected guests.

My sister is in family and friends, my mother's customary way is to flock family and friends, and so my good grandmother would be pleased that this little piece of sweetness has outlived her all the way to the 21st century.

'It's a light cake that is... hard-wired into my brain as the culinary equivalent of home'

Baking and cooking classes for the holidays

DOROTHY'S Cooking School offers cooking and baking lessons to help you prepare for the holidays. The classes are half-day sessions with the following classes: Nov. 22, Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 nn, Getting Ready for the Holidays: All American S'more Brownies, Butterscotch Brownies with Pecans and Nuts, German Chocolate Brownies with Coconut Caramel Topping, Tipsy Mexican Brownies, Updated Rocky Road Brownies.

Nov. 24, Monday, 1-3:30 p.m., Dessert: 2 Apple Oatmeal Muffins, Bubble Made Easy, Mango-ice Pie Slices, Caramel Coffee Cake, Baked Orange Dessert.

Nov. 26, Wednesday, 1:30-5 p.m., Basic Bread and Variations: Classic French Buttercream, Chocolate, Passion Mango, Caramel, Mocha.

Nov. 28, Friday, 1:30-5 p.m. All Dressed Up for Dinner: Tossed Greens with Fruit, Black Pepper Dressing, Dressed Up Clear Soup, Baked Clams and Mussels with Assorted Toppings, Roast Chicken with Lemon and Herbs, Hawaiian French Cut Roast Pork Tenderloin, Pesto Fish Salad, Green Rice, Mini Decadent Cake with All The Trimmings.

Dec. 1, Monday, 2:30-5 p.m., Gift Basket to Pack 2: Biscotti, Butterscotch Bars, Butter Loaf, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Meringue Mushrooms, Streusel and Raisin Pudding and how to present them in a basket together with coffee mugs, coffeeset and coffee all in 1 package.

Dec. 3, Wednesday, 1:30-5 p.m., Turn to Wine: My Info to Odds and ends—Caramel Tart, Marzipan Tart, Tuna Tart, Durian Tart, Cashew Tart and Triple Nut Tart.

Dec. 5, Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Breads on Baking: 4 Most used breads from the oven—Chic Bread, Pandan Macapuno Bread, Anadis Bread, Hawaiian Bread, Bubble Loaf with 3 Chocolate Glaze and Bonbonnada.

Call 7717791, Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. or e-mail dorothycook-ingschool@yahoo.com.

Managing restos, canteens

RESTAURATEURS, hoteliers, resort and canteen operators and those planning to open their own foodservice business now have a chance to hone their skills when Productivity Center for Training (PACT) holds its Managing a Restaurant/Canteen Seminar-Workshop on Nov. 24-Dec. 4, (excluding weekends), 1-5 p.m., at Ignacious Bar & Restaurant, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City.

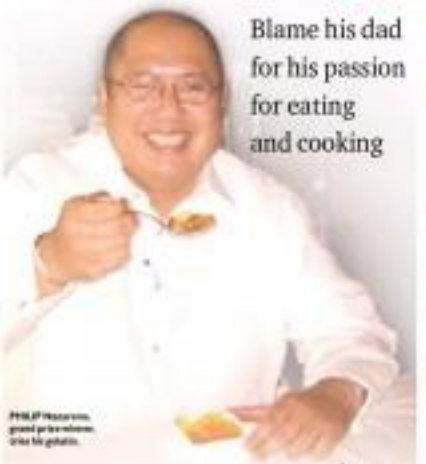
Reservations are currently being accepted on a first-come-first-served basis.

The training will cover such topics as planning the concept, menu, location, layout and equipment, hygiene and sanitation, human resource development, and cost control. Food-service consultants, restaurant managers/owners, and professors of hotel and restaurant management are tapped to be facilitators.

Call 7476470 OR 8122683.

Jumbo Japs /p. C6

LIFESTYLE Tastes



Blame his dad for his passion for eating and cooking

PHILIP Nazareno, grand prize winner, cries his goblets.

Food is life

By Philip E. A. Nazareno

Editor's Note: This is the grand prize winner in the recently concluded Dorcas Cordova Memorial Food Writing Contest 2000.]

"G-E-L-A-T-I-N," my father spelled out in his booming baritone voice. "Whoever knows what that word is will have all of it and none to share with the other," he added. Papa announced his assessment to his two sons—me, at age four, and Anthony, my brother, at age three.

Suddenly Yaya Adoration whispered something to her ward. Simultaneously Anthony yelled, "Unlimin"! I frantically looked around for Mommy, my own yaya. She was nowhere to be found. I became extremely agitated. After all, MOM (Mercy Orbeta Nazareno) is the ultimate favorite food. Anthony squealed and leapt in triumph. He refused to share the spoils of his victory. I ran to my mother and cried.

I am now 37 years old and overweight at 250 pounds. I love food. I was born to eat. "Not so," says my therapist. The alienating emotional episode from my childhood had such negative impact on me, she opines. (I use the catachresis even the triggered my "unhealthy" eating habits, she insists. At every 9000 session I disagreed, and still disagree. I firmly believe that my sense of taste is just much more developed than my other less.)

My most cherished memories are refined with the food I ate when the events occurred. I remember people who are most dear to me either by the food they prepared or the food I shared with them.

My mother? She baked spring chicken with burnt garlic and ginger as well as refrigerator cake with almonds and walnuts. My maternal grandmother? Her trade pochero stirred with Eggless Fruitake, and crockery shots cooked to perfection. My paternal grandmother? Her fun-sautéed (1) stewed in vinegar soy sauce and aromats, (2) thickened with breadcrumbs, and (3) labored with olive oil. My Aunt Pacing? Godmother prepared rich, spicy yellow tongue in mushroom sauce, and the most fabulous leche flan with a caramel sauce that had just the right hint of bitter sweetness. Her custard used egg yolks and only fresh, bottled fat-free or Magnolia milk, no fake cream with one-thousandth per cent sugar.

We ate three it we each dining as "comfort food." The rue, food is comfort.

As a lawyer, when I lost the very first case I handled, I devoured my sorrows with the freshest heavenly midrids at Emilio Restaurant. As the age of 12, when my mother and I had one of our most terrible arguments, I found alleviation with the Restaurante's legendary Caesar's Salad and prune rib with Yorkshire pudding. When my wife left me and filed for an annulment, I found solace in several big, juicy grilled hamburgers—medium rare, that could also probably best describe the degree of passion we cooked up having for each other.

Culinary affair

Yes, food is my comfort. But such comfort is unmatched when I am the one that prepares the food I eat. Again, blame it on my father.

While in high school I was cast in a basketball fanatic that, one time, I played with friends until ten o'clock in the evening. When I got home the family had already finished dinner. The cook and the other household help were already asleep. I attempted to wake up the cook to, well, cook for me. But Papa said that if I were so hungry as to want home as an ungodly hour—me, the gods deep very ready in my father's house—then I should eat for either by going to bed hungry or by cooking my own dinner. The choice was very obvious.

WINNERS of the Doreen Benitez Fernandez Food Writing Award pose with the members of the Awards Committee at Restaurante Pili: (first row, from left) Gina Playa, Paolo Mangahas, Police Sto. Maria (FNFS chair), C. Herminio Mesquerra, Pia Lopez; (second row, from left) James Deen, Philip Nazareno and Nicolas Lucero.

I took a thick rib-eye from the freezer, defrosted it while I showered, sprinkled salt and pepper on it, and pan fried it to medium-rare perfection. Then I got a few cloves of garlic and made sinangag. Thus started my love affair with the kitchen. My dreams of becoming the next Robert Jaworski flew out of the window or rather jumped into the frying pan.

My love of cooking became so great that during my senior year in high school I unconsciously or my family that I wanted to become a chef. My father would frown at the thought. One must understand that in 1982, parents still had not heard of culinary academies. Bogart was still on his first term, there was still a Imelda Union, the exchange rate was still eight pesos to a dollar, and the word "mall" was not even a figment in Henry Sy's imagination.

I never became a chef. I followed in my father's wishes. However, quite often while I am in meat or in the midst of negotiations for the restructuring of a corporate client's loan, my mind wanders to what spice or herb might make a great rub for a roast.

Yes, food is my comfort. Food is my life.

Thankfully, my family realizes it now. During get-togethers, my relatives often request, nay, order me to cook at least one dish. I always happily oblige.

Just the other night, at my father's decree, I created lamb curry at his house. Blissfully [illegible] it was for him.—the man whom I blame for transforming me into such a food-a-holic—I really couldn't myself.

"That was delicious," he exclaimed after his third serving. Then father asked, "What's for dessert?"

"G-E-L-A-T-I-N," I teased him with a wink, then added, "and it's all for me!"

CALIFORNIA Maki (rolled with crab, mango, Japanese mayo and fish roe)

SIZZLING Beef Teppanyaki

JUMBO Japs Special rolls stuffed with prawns, Japanese mayo and spring onions, topped with fish roe)

Healthy food, big servings

Jumbo Japs offers generous portions of Japanese staples that are easy on the heart and waistline

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Roger Carpio

Once perceived as an exotic cuisine, Japanese cuisine seems to be everywhere these days.

The wild surge in its popularity is linked to its health calmess. Easy on the heart and waistline, the emphasis in Japanese cooking is on seafood, rice and vegetables, rather than high-cholesterol red meat and dairy foods.

"I think Japanese cuisine is the third most popular food in the country," says Michael Dargent, president of Jumbo Japs.

Dargent put up the casual dining restaurant in January with his wife Nanette because "we love Japanese food. This can be lean and healthy even if you take Japanese food every day, (especially sushi and sashimi, which are super lean)."

"Many people go to health-conscious diners days that they're happy with only sushi for a meal. It's light but filling," adds Nanette, a vegetarian who cooks traditional Japanese fare.

Extensive menu

Jumbo Japs draws customers with an extensive menu of hot, cooked dishes as well as cold, raw foods designed by executive chef Shunsuke Ogoshi, who was trained by a Japanese chef and restaurant owners.

Many of the selections are paired with special sauces and the breathtakingly hot and pungent wasabi.

The menu features maki (worth P60-P70), sashimi (P60-P130) and sushi (P60-P110), including aburi (raw sashimi (P120) and Jumbo Japs Special (P95), two large rolls stuffed with prawns, Japanese mayo, spring onions and fish roe).

Grilled items include yakitori (P35), gindara teriyaki (P180) and beef teriyaki (P160).

For deep-fried fare, there's Jumbo Prawn Tempura (P200), Tonkatsu (P120) and Tofu Agedashi (P65).

Kamameshi rice (P30-P120), teppanyaki items (P120-P200), nabemeh (P190 and P380), rice bowls (P125-P150), soup (P80) and salads (P60 and P85) are also available.

For the growing number of vegetarians and health-conscious diners, the restaurant offers Veggie Dumplings (P75), Tofu Steak (P120), Vegetable Tempura (P80), Kakiage (P90), and Vegetable Yakimeshi (P95).

"Many people find Japanese food expensive. But at Jumbo Japs, we offer quality yet affordable food served in generous portions. With P180-200, you can have a good meal of rice, two or three dishes and a refillable drink," says Dargent.

Located at 38 Aspiras corner Planet Sts., Makati, Jumbo Japs (tels. 8958135 and 8958147) does not call itself "jumbo" for nothing.

"We're very proud of our tempura because they're really big prawns—not small shrimps hiding in a lot of batter," says Dargent.

PRAWN Tempura

More than a meal

Jumbo Japs also gives diners the opportunity to shop for modern and traditional Japanese artworks, including framed paintings and prints, Bizhota vases, stoneware, crockery, antique swords and Japanese silk, which are displayed in the 100-seater restaurant.

Proceeds from the sale of these artworks will be used to fund the Sonrisa Center of Mary Mediatrix, a charitable institution fostering on the education, value formation and spiritual empowerment of street children.

Designed by architect Ben del Rosario, the restaurant is painted in yellow and orange, "which make the restaurant modern, refreshing and upbeat," says its proud owners.

Jumbo Japs is open Monday to Thursday, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 6-10:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, until 11 p.m.

Call 8958135, 8958147 or 893-3365386.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

WARM Walnut Fudge Brownie with Vanilla Ice Cream

TORI Kamameshi (traditional bento cooked rice topped with chicken)

(From left) MICHAEL Dargent and his wife Nanette with restaurant managers Shoyo Fuentebella and Henry Villamor

Reggie Aspiras' holiday cooking

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts' cooking class schedules are as follows:

Nov. 22—Gourmet Seafood Holiday Style: Rib Roast with Crab Stuffing, Salt Baked Snapper with Citrus Sauce, Herb Crusted Sea Bass with Wine Sauce, Black Cod with Chorizo Sauce, Black Cod with Crab and Shrimp Sauce, Crisp Pearl Fish Shell Crabs with 3 Sauces (Asian Chili, Seafood and Lime) Tempura fish Shell Crab Salad with Mixed Greens and Fruit Dressing, Whole Baked Norwegian Salmon with three sauces (wasabi, tangle and mixed fruit mayonnaise), Homemade Black Paste with Squid and Basil, Olive Oil, Ravioli of Sea Bass with two sauces, Salmon and Caviar and Rustic Tomato Sauce, Mussels Soup, side dishes and dessert recipes to be demonstrated in class (P2,800 + ingredients)

Nov. 23—Pasta Favorite 1: Carbonara, Vongole, Marinara, Bolognese, Primavera, Puttanesca with Salmon and Caviar

Nov. 24—Holiday Angus Steaks and Side Dishes: Rib-eye Steaks with Brandy Butter and Mushroom Gravy, Bacon Wrapped Steak with Spinach Cakes, Barbecued Prime Rib Steaks with Tomahawk Barbecue Sauce and Mushroom Cream Sauce, Grilled Angus with Bleu Cream, Morel and Swiss Shallot Glaze, Pate Crust and Truffle Potatoes, Pepper Steaks with Cajun Mushroom Sauce and Vegetables

Nov. 25—Gourmet Filipino 2, Pilinggang Pinoy with Spring Vegetables, Balsala Steak Primavera, Bulalo and Seafood Spring Rolls, Roast French Rack of Lamb with Kamias Jelly and Kamias Fries, Bicolan Sago Pudding in Cocoa Anglaise

Nov. 28—Christmas Cocktails: French Oysters with Grape Sauce, Crisp Oysters with Mango Sauce, Crisp Shrimps Cocktail with two sauces, Four Mini Sandwiches (Cold Roast Beef Sandwiches with Horse Radish, Cream Cheese with Fresh Salsa, Fried Mozzarella and Chicken and Fruit), Crab and Avocado Salad, Lobster and Fruit Cocktail, Pate Platter, Homemade Pâtés of Sardine, Eggplant, Foie Gras, Mushroom and Country Style, Cheese and Fruit Platter with Homemade Country Bread, Rhesgo and Champagne Slush Punch, Tequila Cocktail, Strawberry Margarita (P2,800 + ingredients)

Nov. 29—Gourmet Pulutan: Incredible Satay (Three Kinds: Pork and Chicken, Oxtail and Lamb), Calamares, Oyster Steak, Crisp Fried and Tender Beef, Homemade Gourmet Chicharon (Pork, Chicken and Rellenitos and dipping sauces), Gourmet Style Kilawin (Maya-maya, Bile, Oysters and Salmon), Mixed Barbecue (Pork, Chicken with three marinades)

Dec. 1—Globally Delicious Butter-based Cakes: Genoise Christmas Butter, Praline Pound Cake, Old-fashioned Butter and Egg Better Than Sara Lee Butter Pound, Genoise and Irish Pound, White and Strawberry Cake

Dec. 2—Reggie's Filipino Christmas Basics: Soup of Beef and Bone Marrow with Asian Greens, Oven Crisp Lechon with Pear Glaze Sauce, Reggie's Sea Bass, Scallop and Asian Vegetable Kare-Kare with Pamelos Sauce, Whole Marinated Fried Crisp Turkey with Dipping Sauces, Mixed Seafood Roman Paella, Bravo de Mercedes with Yema Vanilla Filling

Call 8189596, 9273888, 8181452 or 8474744. Holiday treats are now available by order only. White Liquor Cake Pack: bourbon, whisky grand marnier and white cake (P400); Mini Rum Cake Gift Pack: mixed nut, dulce, chocolate truffle and apple banana (P400); individual liquor cakes also available (P400); Reggie's Classic Christmas Rhum Caramel Fudge Cake (P275, standard size, minimum 1 dozen; Reggie's Classic Christmas Rhum Caramel Fudge Cake (P175, barrio minimum 1 dozen); Sinfully gooey food for the gods (P450 per can); Salmon and Caviar Cake (P1,000); Delicious Butter Bread (P375).

For the first time, Reggie is also offering a fine selection of Christmas dishes to go. All those who would like to place orders can call, as menus can be personalized based on your requirements.

INTERCON'S Chef Cameron McKay (left) and Australian Embassy's Kerryn Tagle show kids how to make lamingtons.

Poor children treated to an afternoon of fun

IN CELEBRATION of Children's Month and United Nations' Month, the Australian Embassy Manila, in cooperation with Intercontinental Manila and Manny Pacquiao, brought cheer to the less privileged children of SBD Kaalaruya in an event titled "What's Cooking?"

Members of the Australian Embassy staff and their children swooped in Manny Pacquiao for an afternoon of treats with SBD Kaalaruya kids. Both parents and children enjoyed the interactive Manny Pacquiao tour, followed by an engaging, but quite difficult, language-related contest.

The three winners of the contest had the honor of being kitchen helpers to Australian chef Cameron McKay.

Children who participated in the event were given Australian puzzle books.